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THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
ROSE ALLEN.

EDITED BY A LADY.

“ A serviceable, faithful, thoughtful friend
Is old Van Ryk, and of an humble nature ;
And yet with faculties and gifts of sense
Which place him, justly, on no lowly level, —
Why should I say a lowlier than my own,
Or otherwise than as an equal use him ?
That with familiarity respect
Doth slacken, is a word of common use :
I never found it so.”

Van Artevelde.

HENRY TAYLOR.

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P R E F A C E.

IF the language or sentiments of Rose Allen should sometimes appear rather above the position in which she is represented by peculiar circumstances to have been placed, the defect must rest on the Editor, who, in the endeavour to avoid one extreme, may perhaps unintentionally have fallen into the other. It is hoped, however, that the story may help to induce a more general recognition of the reciprocal dependence of Master and Servant, and a more conscientious appreciation of the responsibilities of their respective stations.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
OF
ROSE ALLEN.

CHAPTER I.

NEAR the village of Hale, in South Lancashire, stood, some twenty years since, an old farm-house, built with much timber, and painted black and white: it was covered with a large vine, and stood in the midst of fruit-trees. This was my early home; and I have never seen any place since we left it where the flowers grew in such luxuriance, or the sun seemed to shine so brightly. We all inherited our mother's love for flowers: we had no rare kinds, but a profusion of roses, honeysuckles, jessamines, clove-pinks, auriculas, with a few myrtles and geraniums. Our family was large, and whilst my father prospered we continued to live together. He was the most indulgent of parents; and his high principles, which he carried into the smallest details of life, gave him

a deep and abiding influence over the hearts of his children. He was the son of a clergyman of superior powers of mind, and was very anxious about our education, carefully watching over and aiding it, and was blamed by some of his neighbours for giving too much time to the cultivation of our mental powers : but he always maintained it was the best inheritance he could leave us ; believing there was no danger in learning when accompanied by sound moral training, and thinking it would best fit us to enjoy easy, or to encounter adverse fortune. My mother was not in strong health, though fully capable of directing us ; and, dearly as she loved reading, took care to make us good housekeepers, and simple in our tastes and feelings. Our greatest enjoyment was in ministering to her comfort, saving her from unnecessary exertion, procuring little pleasures to diversify a life of much patient suffering, and in reading to her chiefly from the Bible, which she had studied so deeply and so constantly as often unconsciously to speak in its language, and she exhibited in her thoughts and actions an almost perfect example of its divine influence.

The clergyman of the parish was a kind and valuable friend to us all. His only daughter was very lovely in mind and person, and the object of our warmest friendship and emulation, especially to myself and eldest brother. We had been her

constant companions in the school-room ; and for two years Charles had studied hard under Mr. Herbert's superintendence. He had from infancy grown up with a strong wish to enter the clerical profession. When he was about eighteen he left us for Cambridge, where he entered as a sizar ; our circumstances, though easy and comfortable, not allowing the outlay of much money, and we were a large family to provide for. The year Charles went to college was the close of 1824. The harvest about us had failed, and we parted with two of the farm servants ; my father warning us that probably the time was now at hand when we should be called upon to prove how far his precepts had been of use, and whether we were Christians in name only, or in deed. The time was indeed come, and much sooner than we had anticipated. Fever and pestilence were abroad, visiting not only human abodes, but the farmer's live-stock. The opening of 1825 saw us with only one servant in the house, most of our cattle dying, and our father's strong health failing. He would not hear of Charles being recalled ; who was indeed little fitted for labouring out-door occupations. The character of my two elder sisters came out nobly ; they went through the hardest work with a cheerfulness that kept all from despondency, though not from anxiety : this increased every week on our father's account ; for

he fretted about my mother, having been able to save but little. Yet it was long after he was aware of his precarious state before we realised that our guide and protector, our father and friend, was going to leave us. To the last he gave us instructions for the future; and his death-bed, in spite of outward trials, was peaceful, from his consciousness of the great love of his wife and children, of his own good and upright life, and his trust in the Almighty protection promised to the widowed and the fatherless. I cannot speak of the closing scene, or the melancholy fortnight which followed. Mr. Herbert, the clergyman, helped us in making our arrangements: he advised Charles's continuing at Cambridge; found places in the neighbourhood for my two eldest sisters, and for Robert, now fifteen years old, whom he apprenticed to a farmer. I was then sixteen, and the rest of the family consisted of four little ones. It was decided that we should go with our mother to Liverpool, where we should be near cheap schools, and should have more chance of obtaining such light work as my poor mother was capable of undertaking, and to fill up the little leisure I should have besides fulfilling the duties of servant to them all.

The farming-stock, utensils, and most of the furniture, were sold by auction, reserving some of the last to lessen the expense of lodgings. The

proceeds of the sale Mr. Herbert invested in the same security as my father's savings; and we found our income would be about 50*l.* per annum. From this we were obliged to send 20*l.* to Charles, leaving only 30*l.* for the support of six individuals. Charles came down for the funeral, but returned before we moved; at which we all rejoiced, well knowing he would at once have renounced his profession, had he realised how we proposed to live. We had a harder trial in parting from Robert, whose shy, timid disposition seemed peculiarly to stand in need of the sunshine of home, and when with strangers was apt to become reserved, and even sullen. Our mother's good sense, however, comforted her with the hope that this change of circumstances would strengthen his character, and teach him the self-reliance necessary to his future happiness and success.

Early one day in March a covered cart came to the door to convey us away from this very dear home. The children were sorry to leave their favourite haunts, but half pleased at the novelty and the prospect of seeing the great town to which we were going. Mr. Herbert had procured lodgings in Frederick Street,—three rooms on a third floor; and for these we were to pay 5*s.* 6*d.* a-week, nearly half our remaining income. The same kind friend had procured the

first evening meal, ready to greet our arrival ; but, in spite of his attentive preparations, we entered our new abode with heavy hearts : all was in sad contrast to the home we had left. A thick yellow fog hung over the town ; carts and carriages rolled by incessantly ; and quarrelsome children were crowded on the steps of the lodging-house. We silently made our way along the narrow passage, went up the steep creaking stairs, each flight causing my mother to breathe quicker and more painfully ; and the people we met either staring us out of countenance or pushing past with hasty indifference. The landlady, with a kind of dogged resolution, piloted us to the third floor, and noisily threw open the door of the sitting-room, closing it upon us the moment we entered. A single candle was on the table, and a tray ready for tea. I hastened to give my mother a cup, for she was too faint to speak. As she lay down on the miserable sofa, one of its legs broke, and we were obliged to prop it up with one of our boxes. The children were quiet with astonishment and fear at the dark room, the noisy voices in every part of the house, and the perpetual shaking of the room from footsteps above and below. My dear mother, when a little refreshed, drew me to her, and kissed me, saying, " Let us be thankful, love, that we can be alone here together." I could not repress a few tears,

though cheered by her affection, which made me feel, at the right moment, how richly we were blessed when she was still spared to us; but the tears proved infectious, and both little girls began to cry, partly from weariness. It was some time before they could be consoled; nor was it effected until Johnny and Willy discovered a poor little kitten, which seemed half starved, and engaged the attention of all. I took this opportunity to look at our sleeping-apartments: they were very poor, and I did not know how my mother was to rest in such confusion. The children fortunately were so tired, that they dropped asleep as soon as they were in bed; and then I had a long talk with my mother as to our future proceedings. She wished me to go first to the corporation schools, and see if all the four little ones could be taken in at once, and then to call on the lady in Rodney Street, whom Mr. Herbert had mentioned as likely to supply us with sewing. When we had decided upon this plan, we went to bed. In spite of sorrow and constant noise I soon slept, but often awoke, and saw too plainly that my mother never rested. In the morning she was too ill to rise, and I went out with sad forebodings.

I could not find out the schools from the directions impatiently given by our landlady; but a kind old Irish woman, who was selling fruit in a basket,

showed me the way, giving me a posy of southernwood and snowdrops from her scanty stock. I was greatly delighted, for all our trials had not prevented my fearing we should never see flowers again. After some trouble, I agreed with the schoolmistress that the children should come that afternoon at two o'clock, and then went back to my Irish friend to ask where I should obtain food for our dinner. She gave me various instructions; but it was twelve o'clock when I again found myself at home, having expended two shillings in what seemed but a scanty meal. My mother asked me what I had spent; and when I told her, I was sorry to see she looked grieved, though she immediately said, with a smile, "Never mind to-day: but we must try to live upon less, if we mean to have food at all." I took the children to school, and at three o'clock, cold and weary, rang the bell at Mrs. Gray's house in Rodney Street. A footman opened the door, saying, sharply, "Well, and what's your business?" "I wish to speak to Mrs. Gray, to ask if she can give us some sewing." "Not she: she's plenty of folks to do her sewing." But, seeing his lady passing, he told her my request. She replied, "Oh, I can't see her now: tell her to call again. What's her name?" I told the man, "Rose Allen:" on hearing which, she said, "Yes, I must see her; it's the child Mr. Herbert spoke about. How tiresome; I shall be late at Mrs. Brown's."

After asking many questions, some of which I thought very strange, she gave me two merino frocks of the children's to be turned, desiring me to bring them as soon as possible. I went back to my mother, who seemed pleased at the kind of work, and immediately began. It was late at night before she came to bed; but uneasy as I felt about her, the day's fatigues had been so great, I could not then speak to her. The next morning I got up in the dark, and going into the parlour, was astonished to see her at work, wrapped up in her cloak, without a fire, and pale with cold. "Oh, mother, you will be ill—I know you will; and you will die: and what shall we do without father or mother?" "My dear Rose, remember that when our rent is paid we have only 6*s.* a week to look to, and that will scarcely find us in bread; the schooling will be 6*d.* weekly; and the chief part of our food, fire, and clothing, where are they to come from? Strength will be given according to our need: and I really had some sleep last night. Besides, dear, you will find the lady expecting these things in a day or two: and we have a character to earn."

I made a small fire according to her directions, and then warmed some rice milk for breakfast. The children were really very good: the kitten had become fond of them, and never failed to come in at meal-times. I remarked upon their quiet-

ness to my mother, and was surprised at her grave look, but she said nothing: a month later, I understood too well why she looked grave.

When the clothes were finished I took them to Mrs. Gray, who was evidently pleased with the neatness and good taste shown in the making up. She said I might tell my mother she was quite satisfied, that she would try to recommend her, and that I might go. I timidly asked for the money, naming 4s. as the price.

“That’s a great deal: and if you ask so much, you must come again, for I hav’n’t so much change in my purse.”

“When shall I come?”

“Oh! to-morrow evening will do: go away now.”

As I returned down Bold Street, I asked at several shops if they had any work. Sometimes I was laughed at, at others impatiently refused; and was very thankful when a person gave me some knitting. My mother, too, seemed pleased, and said we must expect such occurrences as having to wait for our money. I made two more visits before I could obtain it, but brought some more work when I returned, which kept us busy for some time. But, hard as we worked, want made itself felt: my mother grew constantly weaker, and could with difficulty walk into the sitting-

room; the children looked thin and pale, — not that they were actually short of food, but the change from country air, country freedom, and the plenty of a farm, soon made them very different in appearance: their clothing, too, was rapidly wearing out, and we had no funds with which to replace it. Susan, the youngest, was attacked with a sort of low fever, which added to our expenses, and at the same time took up the time I had given to sewing.

One evening she seemed so ill, I went for a doctor. He was at dinner, but left it immediately, asking many questions as we walked back. I told him 1s. 6d. was all we had to offer him; but he refused to take anything, and we went up stairs. After ordering some medicine, he desired me to come with him for it; and as soon as we were in the street, he said the child was pining for better food and good air: and seeing how distressed I was at hearing it, he asked if a district visitor came to us; and when I said no, he promised to see about it, as he thought we wanted some better instructions for managing in a large town.

After receiving the medicine, and some jelly, which the doctor's lady gave me with her own hands, I hastened home. Just as I reached it, I saw Robert standing at the door. He looked bright and healthy, and would hardly believe that I was

his sister,—so great a change had a few months produced. He had come at a fortunate time, for my mother was greatly depressed by the doctor's opinion of Susan, and was much cheered by Robert's improvement and evident cheerfulness. He had brought a basket of fresh fruit and flowers, over which we wept with delight and sorrow from the mingled remembrances they recalled of past days. We inquired after the Herberts: and he told us Miss Herbert was prettier than ever; that she visited all the poor cottages, and often asked after us; and sometimes said she would come and see us: and then Robert produced a letter from Charles, directed to me, but which had been enclosed in one to Mr. Herbert.

In this letter he spoke of his trials and many difficulties, but that they were fully compensated by the delight of free access to books; the intercourse with good and learned men; the old venerable buildings, and the religious services, which all increased his desire to enter the sacred profession. He had found one kind friend, who studied with him, and was his constant companion. On the whole, he was very happy; though, after sending most affectionate messages to all of us by name, he concluded with saying, there were seasons in which he felt very lonely; when he longed for his mother's kiss and smile of morning greeting, her evening

blessing, and our merry voices, — when he sighed to see again Clara Herbert's lovely face, and wept over the remembrance of the father we had lost, whose sympathy and counsel would have been so invaluable in his present situation.

The next day Susan was better, though very weak: and when she saw the flowers, cried and begged to go home again. She wanted to see her chickens, and to sit on the old mossy root of papa's favourite apple-tree, the best in the orchard. Whilst she was speaking we heard a gentle knock, and were surprised to see Clara Herbert. She kissed us all round, and her eyes filled with tears to see the sad change in our situation and appearance. She said her father, who had come over that morning from Hale to hear a charity sermon preached in Liverpool, had brought her with him, and she was going to stay with us during service. It was decided that Robert should go with Mr. Herbert and the children to church, and afterwards to St. George's pier, where they were constantly begging to go. Clara then questioned of all that had passed since we last met, and ended with asking us to let her take Susan back with her: but my mother at first refused; though sorely tempted by her present illness, she did not wish her little girl to live, even for a short time, so differently to the manner in which her future life must be spent.

When Mr. Herbert came in, he seconded Clara's request, saying, he thought my mother's objection sensible; but he would propose treating her from the first as one of their servants, and bringing her up to be one. This was a tempting offer, — to think of her as under their kind care, in the country, and with the prospect of living with them as a settled servant: but we still hesitated, because she was so young, and Mr. Herbert was so far from rich. We feared that for some years she would be a sad burden. Both father and daughter said it would be only a trifling addition: and my mother, not having the false pride, which shrinks from receiving kindness from even real friends, at last thankfully consented. They urged the child's immediate removal: and though it was a grief to part with her so ill, we were reconciled by the hope that it would do more for her recovery than any thing else in our power.

Our friends would not take any refreshment, but some bread and milk, and set off in their old phaeton before the children had returned from their walk. I tried to be grateful for the great blessing we had received; but the sight of these associates of by-gone times, the witnessing again Mr. Herbert's fond proud love of his daughter, and her devoted attachment to him, would bring thoughts that I too had had a father to care for every wish, to watch over me, and whom I loved as the model of all that was excellent, — happy if I

could perform the least service for him, in meeting his looks of affection, and sitting on his knee, while he repeated noble passages of poetry, or spoke of the future, when his hair would become grey, and I should wait upon his old age ; — and now this was all over.

My mother's embrace roused me from these reflections. I knew she guessed what was passing in my mind ; and I turned to her with a gush of inexpressible tenderness and sympathy for the still heavier trial she was undergoing. To please her, I went out a little way ; and, thinking I would meet Robert, turned, as I thought, up the right street, but it led me quite wrong ; and my look of bewilderment probably betraying what had happened, a gentlemanly young man told me how to find my way home, — where the children were arrived, and very anxious for the potato pie, which I had spent our last money the previous evening in obtaining.

The next morning, about nine o'clock, a young lady was shown to our room. We thought she had come about work, and asked her to sit down ; but she turned out to be the district visitor, whom the excellent doctor had requested to visit us. We had not a penny to put by, — indeed only the younger ones had had food that day ; and I was hard at work upon a shirt, for which I had been promised a shilling. The lady, who was called Miss Evelyn, had a most sweet expression of

face ; and her inquiries were made with so much delicacy and consideration for our feelings, that we soon found ourselves talking of our affairs with great openness. Whether she guessed how very badly we were off that morning, I do not know ; but asking me to put a letter in the post for her, said she must not take up my time without paying for it ; and placing a couple of shillings on the table, told us she would call the next day, and have some further conversation about our different arrangements. We thanked her with full hearts. I ran out with the letter, impatient to bring my dear mother a cup of tea. But how I loved this amiable young lady, when she came the following day, bringing a warm soft shawl for my mother, who was beginning to feel the effects of winter, though it was only just the end of October.

I have never forgotten that day's lesson, which taught me how much those who have leisure and cultivation of mind may do without giving relief in the form of actual charity. Miss Evelyn staid at least a couple of hours ; showing us the best mode of ventilating our rooms ; telling us the shops where we should find good and cheap materials ; giving me receipts for cheap nourishing food, and explaining what was really the most economical kind of provisions. She lamented the strange prejudice existing in sea-port towns

against the use of fish, and told us where we could often obtain sufficient for a dinner, for 6*d.*; and then she spoke of the absolute necessity for the poor to try to save. She said she should visit us every week, and as the carriage came for her, her last words were that she should expect to find 2*d.* ready for her when Monday came round. I watched her driving away, and caught a glimpse of an old lady who called for her, and who seemed the picture of venerable and beautiful old age: this lady we afterwards found was her mother.

I have not mentioned my older sisters since we left Hale: we heard from them occasionally: they were on the whole comfortable, but too busy to come and see us. At Midsummer each had sent my mother 10*s.*, and little gifts of their own making came not unfrequently, which showed how fondly they still thought of and loved us.

For two or three weeks I tried to put in practice Miss Evelyn's various directions, and we contrived to live more comfortably: she gave us work; and though never paying more than its just and proper price, we had not to wait a day after it was due. A new anxiety had come upon us about Johnny, who was twelve years old, and who, since Robert's taking him to watch the ships going out, had imbibed a strong passion for the sea, and declared he would never go into any other business. Every leisure moment was spent

at the docks, and we were in continual fear of his making off without permission. My mother was so miserable, I at last persuaded him to give his promise that he would not go without her leave, and then told him we would consult Charles about him.

In a few days the answer came, and we were much surprised at his advising us to let him indulge his inclinations: he thought it time that John should begin to earn his own livelihood, and when there was so much scarcity of employment, it would be best to take advantage of, so decided a preference: he assured us that captains took much more care than formerly of their crews, and we must if possible be very careful in our selection.

My mother wept incessantly for some days over this letter, and we agreed to ask Miss Evelyn's opinion. She gave it in Johnny's favour, and promised to make some inquiries for us about a vessel. A day or two after this conversation, a hamper came directed to me, which on opening, I found contained six bottles of old madeira wine, and a label with these words, — "For Mrs. Allen, from an unknown but sincere friend." We were much surprised; the more so as Miss Evelyn denied knowing anything of the affair. I was most thankful, for it was greatly needed, as my mother seemed latterly to droop more and more: she was at first unwilling to use it, but could not resist our kisses and entreaties.

The next day when the boys came home to dinner, they asked where Mary was, and to our dismay we heard they could not find her about the school, and supposed she had run on before. I told Willy to stay with our mother, and went off directly with John to search the neighbouring streets. At two o'clock, when school opened, I hastened to ask who had last seen her, and was additionally alarmed by hearing that she had not been at her lessons that morning; she had left her brothers at the boys' entrance, and no one had seen her since. I dared not return to our lodgings, but desired Johnny to go for his dinner, and then come to me again, while in the mean time I explored some of the adjoining dark lanes and cellars: in one of the latter I met my old friend the Irish woman, who said,

"Is it the little girl you are looking for? I'm thinking ye'll not see her blue eyes in a hurry."

"Why do you say so? do you know where she is?"

"No, but I see'd her this morning with another girl going past, as if to the docks: but don't take on so, Miss Rose; I'll go with you."

We had a long search in vain; and nothing could persuade the old woman to look in any other direction; so certain was she they must be somewhere in the neighbourhood of the docks: after two hours had slipped away I returned

home. My poor mother was in fearful agitation: she pressed me to eat, but I could not; and she did not then wish to detain me; and I told Willy on no account to leave her, whilst John went with me. It was nearly dark as we walked up Lord Street, and I did not notice Biddy Walsh, our Irish friend, who was running as fast as the crowd would let her, until just as we were passing, she caught a sight of us, and grasping my arm, said in breathless haste,

“She is found — och, the darlint’s found; but she’s not herself yet.”

“Oh, tell me for mercy’s sake what has happened — where is she?”

“She’s just laid in a warm bed, Miss Rose, and they say the life’s in her, though she has been in the water.” The ground seemed to move from under my feet; but taking hold of Biddy, I made her run towards the place; though, as soon as I could speak, I sent John to tell my mother; Biddy assuring us by all the powers that she still had the breath in her. Not far from the Parade, in the upper room of a small shop, I found poor Mary. A surgeon was there, and using every effort to restore consciousness. I thought she was gone, for there was not a trace of colour; but they said her pulse was perceptible, and when I lay down by her side, and felt a faint breath from her lips, my heart rose in mute gratitude to God. I rubbed her, kissed her, pressed her in my arms, spoke

to her, and at last her eyes slowly opened, and a gleam of consciousness showed she knew me. I then noticed a very pleasing girl amongst the assistants. She spoke to me most kindly, and I afterwards found she was sister to the young man who had directed me when I lost my way a few weeks previously, and whose name was Grant. Mary now murmured something which sounded like "Mother, where is mother?" I turned to ask Biddy to go and tell her the good news; but she was already gone, and I asked the doctor whether the child could be removed that night: he thought she might in another hour or two. The time passed heavily, though every few minutes showed some change for the better. She became anxious to talk, and tell me how it happened. She said a girl whom she was fond of begged her just as they were going into school to help to find a silver thimble, a present from her godmother, and which she dared not meet the mistress without having with her: they went a long way through many streets without finding it, and Mary was in great fear of disgrace at school: her companion at last took a key from her pocket, opened the door of a wretched-looking dark house, and shut it instantly, saying, "Look, Mary, mother's out, and we'll have a feast;" and she produced a basket with stores from some apple-woman. In vain Mary begged to be let out, and it was past twelve

before the door was opened: an older sister, who had joined in the plot, took them a long walk under pretence of taking Mary home. Mary did not know the way; and when at last she contrived to separate from them, she wandered about unable to find it; when near the docks, she had been tempted to look at something going on in the river, and it was then she had fallen in. "Will mother forgive me, Rose?" she sobbed out; but the surgeon interposed. He said she was much excited, and must be kept perfectly quiet. I asked who had saved her; and Jane Grant said, with a quiet smile,

"My brother was so happy as to be the means of saving the life of a fellow-creature."

I tried to thank her, but in vain; and she promised to come and see us the next day, and then helped in wrapping Mary in blankets to be carried home. My mother, happy as she was, was obliged to go to bed when she had at last realised that her child was safe; and the surgeon said I too must rest: yet Mary could not be left without watchful care; and it was now eleven o'clock at night, and I knew no one in the great town to whom I could apply: but as this thought passed through my mind, the good kind-hearted old Irish woman came in, and insisted on watching Mary, while I had a few hours' rest. I lay down, not intending to sleep more than two hours at

the outside ; but great exhaustion prevented my waking until six in the morning.

Mary was going on well. She asked for some tea, and I went to make some for her and the faithful attendant, who had watched her most carefully ; but when it was ready, she had slipped away to avoid thanks or reward, and entered upon her day's toil, unprepared by a single hour's sleep. During the day we constantly expected to see Jane or Edward Grant ; but they came not, and some days passed over, during which we felt very uncomfortable ; sometimes fearing they were suffering in some way for their generous aid, and longing to give vent to our thankfulness for the restoration of our darling Mary.

I went to the Irish woman ; but she had neither seen nor heard anything of them, and it remained a constant subject of regret.

We were much perplexed how to raise money sufficient for Johnny's outfit ; and after many consultations, it was agreed to sell an old watch, which had been in our family two hundred years, and was the object of our childish admiration and respect ; the tradition ran that one of our great grandmothers, who had come from Shropshire, and who lived near Boscobel House, had received it in pledge from King Charles himself. It was the only article of value we possessed ; but we had no choice, and my mother desired me to take it

to a jeweller in Bold Street, celebrated for his great taste for old curiosities of this description. She wrote a few lines stating her reasons for disposing of it; and I believe the lady-like appearance of the writing was of importance to my mission. I was shown into a little back-room, and the head partner came in. He was civil, though rather stately in his manners, — something, I did not know what, reminded me of Jane and Edward Grant. He did not seem to doubt the reality of our account, and offered twenty guineas. My mother had hoped for more, because the royal crest was engraved upon the case of the watch; but as she had told me to take twenty pounds if I could not obtain more, I could not refuse, and Mr. Wilson would not advance at all upon his first offer. He paid the money, and I spent five pounds in materials for us to begin upon. Many articles we were obliged to order, and though all were completed for about the twenty pounds, we were again in distress, from not having had leisure for our usual sewing.

One day, when Miss Evelyn was with us, she spent nearly two hours in reading, talking, and consoling my poor mother, who was overwhelmed by the parting from Johnny, who had set out on his first long voyage to the East Indies only the day before. His courage too had given way at the last, and we could hardly persuade her that his sorrow-

ful crying and many fears would probably be dispersed when once on board: she had had no sleep since he left, until now, when Miss Evelyn's kind cares had soothed her into slumber. While she slept, this valuable friend said, "She had been thinking whether it would not be better for me to go to service, as our mother was able to move about the house, though she never left it, and she thought Mary could do almost all that was necessary in the intervals of her schooling; that it would make one less to feed, and I should be able to help them by my wages." She spoke long before I could answer: the idea was so new, so startling, so miserable, that at first I could only weep, and ask did she really think it the best plan? She was very patient with me, and replied, she thought it not only best, but necessary; that my health could not long support incessant labour and anxiety without better nourishment; that my mother suffered on my account; and that when she was left with only Mary and Willy, they might live in smaller and cheaper lodgings; and she hoped the fine sewing which she did so well would bring in sufficient to support the three, when added to their income of 12s. weekly. I could not deny the reasonableness of all this; but still I feared my mother's overworking her strength, and I could not imagine how I should be able to do right, without

being constantly with her. I begged Miss Evelyn to tell her, which she promised to do the next time she came, and then kissing me affectionately, whispered, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Before she came, however, my mother knew what had passed. She soon noticed my efforts to be cheerful, and questioned me so closely, I could not resist telling her all. I cannot repeat what she said. She consoled me as only mothers can, with the fullest sympathy in all I felt, and yet cheering, and reasoning me into submission to what seemed the path of duty.

When Miss Evelyn called a few days after, she asked me to leave her alone with my mother, who told me afterwards what had passed. She said Miss Evelyn had heard of a place likely to suit, and one, she thought, my mother would be easy in letting me undertake. It was in a Quaker family, who wanted some one who could work well, and wait on the ladies, without being called a lady's maid. It was a quiet family, where they thought much of the duty of watching over their servants, and my mother gladly agreed. Miss Evelyn said, Miss Barker, the lady in question, would call in a day or two, and then, with her usual delicacy, she spoke of Willy, whose great quickness in school learning had often attracted her attention, and she and her father thought he

would make a good schoolmaster or clerk: her father had desired her to offer his help for a few years in his education, proposing indeed to send him to a good school entirely at his own expense. Part of this benevolent plan was to remove Mary with my mother to airy lodgings at the top of Duke Street, near which was a day school for Mary, and for the two apartments the rent would be 3*s.* 6*d.* weekly: she left my mother shedding tears of thankfulness, and with many details which I have omitted, my mother told me all. Willy was to go to his new boarding school after Christmas, and we were almost impatient for Miss Barker to call, that I might know how long I could stay with them at home; we were to move into the lodgings on New Year's Day. I began to recruit my wardrobe; though it was so dismal an occupation, I should never have accomplished it but for my mother's affectionate help and advice. Miss Barker made her visit, and wished me to go in a week's time, which we found would be the day after Christmas Day. My wages were to be 10*l.*, and all seemed satisfactory; my mother was greatly pleased with the lady's gentleness, and friendly manners. I was grieved at the thoughts of leaving them in our present dark abode, and Christmas Day was indeed melancholy, though Robert and Susan came to dinner, and my sisters and our old neighbours sent many presents of Christmas

fare. We did our best to be cheerful; but the past could not be forgotten, nor my dear father's words the previous twelvemonth, when he had said, "My dear wife and children, we shall not mind poverty, if we can keep together." Little did we think how soon we were to be scattered abroad, and he far away. Charles wrote one of his most affectionate letters. He could not afford a journey to Liverpool; but he should think of us all, pray for us, and drink our health, with his young student friend, lonely and poor like himself, but whom he had taught to know us by long conversations about home and its inmates. He was obliged to work very hard, not only at books, but as a tutor, and as a periodical writer; and was too busy in general to have leisure to be unhappy, though at times he felt very anxious to see for himself, how we looked, and how we were going on.

The evening was spent in talking of the future, my mother giving me much valuable advice; and then we sang hymns and read together. Mary had a singularly good voice and quick ear, and all joined in as well as they were able. Robert and Susan were obliged to go at eight o'clock.

The following day, after a fond and sorrowful parting from my mother, Mary and Willy, I set out on foot for Miss Barker's residence; a rather large old house in the Everton neighbourhood.

CHAP. II.

MISS BARKER's house was a large one in the suburbs, and stood in a garden: while walking to it, I thought chiefly of those I had left behind; but when I rang the bell, which seemed to go through my head like a sharp knife, the full consciousness that I had left home, and the wretched feelings on entering a family of entire strangers came over me, and when the door was opened, I could scarcely walk in. My fellow-servants received me kindly, and explained what duties I should be expected to undertake, and about nine o'clock a bell rang for us to go into the parlour and hear a chapter read. I felt much frightened, but followed the cook, and sat down by her, unable for some time to look round the room. It was comfortable and very neat, no pictures, no piano, no mirrors, or even flowers. There were two maiden ladies, Miss Barker and her sister: their nephew, who formed the rest of the family, was at this time from home. The two sisters might have been sitting for their portraits, they seemed so very carefully yet simply dressed: they were very different in appearance, Miss Ellen, the younger, being short,

fair, plump, with a quiet, good-humoured, serene expression ; while Miss Mary was tall and thin, and her composure and self-control seemed more to be the result of habitual effort.

When the reading was over, there was a long silent pause, which greatly surprised me, and made me feel very uncomfortable, for I thought the ladies must be looking at us all the time ; neither did I understand how my companions knew when to go away, which they did, without any one speaking. I was told soon after to take some hot water up stairs to Miss Barker's room. When I went in she said, " I am pleased to see thee, Rose Allen, and hope thou wilt be comfortable here ; we live very quietly, but at thy age it is an advantage to be kept out of the way of temptation." I courtesied, and told her I would do my best to give satisfaction ; to which she replied, she hoped I should never neglect reading the Scriptures every day, and if any difficulty should arise I had better apply to her for advice. When a few days had gone over, I became fond of the eldest sister, but the second seemed more difficult to please. I did not always understand her directions, and at first found it very difficult to remember all my duties at the right moment ; and this I soon learnt was of great importance.

I have mentioned our singing at home, and that we were all very fond of music ; and I was

so accustomed to sing over my work, that I was not long in beginning, when left alone at any time. I was one day washing some old china in Miss Barker's room, and occasionally singing fragments of "My ain Fireside," when Miss Mary came in. She said very gravely, "I think, Rose Allen, thou had better not spend thy time in vain songs; it is unprofitable for thee, and has a tendency to make thee giddy and light-minded." After this rebuke I did my best to leave off the habit; but it was not easy, and I frequently found myself humming over the forbidden tunes.

On Thursdays and Sundays the family went to meeting, and every thing they did was arranged in such clock-work routine, I often wondered they were not weary of so grave a life. Kind as they undoubtedly were, they did not seem affectionate; and though I had not expected to receive the endearments to which I was accustomed at home, I had supposed I should see the same manners and ways of going on between the different members of the family; but there was a passiveness in their salutations, and an immovable composure of aspect, which seemed calculated to repress all natural outbreaks of feeling.

There was company to dinner one day, and I remembered I had left some cleaning apparatus in the dining-room; and, from the dead silence concluding that dinner could not be gone in, I softly opened

the door, and was amazed, and half frightened to see all the party sitting round the table with dinner before them, but neither eating, drinking, or speaking. I went to tell my fellow-servants ; but they laughed, and said they often did so, and they believed it was instead of saying grace. This seemed very strange, and I did not think the servants right in laughing at a matter of religious custom : my gravity and surprise made them laugh still more, and one of them said I should be a Quaker myself ere long.

I could not soon get over there being no music ; it seemed to me it was allowed in the Bible, and they might surely sing psalms, if they objected to profane songs. The cook said Master Harry was coming the next day, and he liked music as much as any one, and she could tell me a secret about him if I liked. But though very curious to hear more, I thought it would be better not. The carriage went to meet Mr. Harry, whose other name I found was Ashton, the following evening, and certainly his voice did not sound like a Quaker's. Yet he was dressed like one, used their language, and read the chapter to us morning and evening.

A few days after his arrival some wandering musicians with an organ, upon which were little dancing figures, came to the windows. I went into an empty parlour to look at them, and listen

to the pretty German waltz they were playing : Miss Barker soon came in, saying, " I desire, Rose, thou wilt attend to thy own business ; thou seest that this vain show hath already led thee into wrong, for thou hast forgotten to bring the cap I desired thee to my room ; and thou hast kept these unfortunate people so long, thou must give them some food, for I will not permit them to have money at this house." I told her I had not kept them, as they were playing some time before I entered the room ; but she desired me not to make excuses, for I had done wrong. I went away very unhappy, and tempted to dislike this good but tiresome place. When I took them some bread and meat, one of the men said that the gentleman had given them money to play, and they could not go away : on looking up I saw Mr. Harry Ashton leaning out from an upper window. I did not know what to do, and went to the kitchen ; Miss Barker soon followed, and said, " Art thou going to be disobedient ? I did not expect this from thee, Rose : why didst thou not send these people away as I told thee ?" I was obliged to repeat what the man had said, and she looked sorrowful, as she answered, " I ask thy excuse for doubting thee ; my nephew is sadly too fond of these idle tastes."

Mr. Harry was indeed a great torment to his good and precise relatives ; hardly a day passed

but he was in some frolic or mischief; and though his aunts passed over much, and he was in the main very affectionate to them, they were often perplexed as to what was their duty towards him, and feared the effects of his example in the household. Besides his fondness for vain amusements, he differed from them on many important points, and horrified the Misses Barker with singular theories, and what he called "liberal views," which they disliked the more from not always understanding or comprehending what they led to. His favourite mode of teasing was leading them very cautiously to make admissions, which he afterwards turned into condemnation of their peculiar views.

One day, early in spring, he was watching the gardener sowing seeds for salad, which the old man took pride in doing in the form of the letters which composed the maiden names of the two ladies: he had just written and filled up a large M, for Mary, when Mr. Harry said he might go to his other work, for he would finish the names; the man retired, and some weeks after the gentle ladies' indignation was fairly roused by the apparition of the names of Malibran and Braham at full length.

I had sometimes fancied on the Thursday mornings, during the hours when my mistresses were at meeting, that I heard sounds of music;

and twice I had seen a gentleman admitted on these mornings, when I was sure all the family were gone out.

One Thursday, Miss Ellen had a cold, and did not leave her room. About eleven o'clock she rang for me, and asked me if any one was come in. I said, "Not that I knew of." She told me to go and see if Mr. Ashton was at home. I looked into all the rooms except one at the end of a long passage near the laundry, which belonged to him, and was kept locked, and the housemaid said was chiefly filled with tops, hoops, bats for cricket, quoits, &c. The door was fast as usual, but there was a sound of suppressed voices, and something like the tuning of a violin. I met Betsy, the housemaid, who seemed vexed at my coming there, and said, "I'd better say nothing about it, she had promised not, and it was none of my affair." I went to Miss Ellen and told her I could not find Mr. Harry; she did not look satisfied, but after asking me whether I had been singing that morning, said I might go.

The following week the ladies went out as usual, as well as Mr. Harry; but very soon after, I saw him come in again and go down the long passage: a ring at the front door bell was succeeded by music of more than one kind, and I could no longer doubt he took advantage of his aunt's absence to take lessons upon

the flute and violin. I scarcely knew how far this was wrong; I did not see any harm in his learning music, but the concealment I could not help thinking was so, and I dreaded the questions which might be asked. In the afternoon, Miss Ellen inquired if I had heard the same sounds again. I said "Yes;" and then she said, "Dost thou know any thing about them?" I knew not what to say; and before I could reply she was called away to speak to some one. Just then, Miss Barker desired me to take some wine and biscuits to a gentleman in the back parlour: I obeyed; and to my surprise saw Mr. Edward Grant; he too looked astonished, and I hastily gave vent to some of the gratitude we had never had any opportunity of expressing: he listened impatiently, saying it was what any one would have done. His manner pained me, for it was totally different to the two former occasions of our meeting, and I thought perhaps my situation had something to do with it. I had learnt from Biddy Walsh that he was a clerk, and I believe he had come to the house on business with Miss Barker. With a silent courtesy, I was leaving the room, when he started up, and coming to the door said, "Take care how you act while here; do not let others lead you to conceal what you know to be wrong; take care of yourself for your mother's sake, and for——" he turned away abruptly, and I left him,

half pleased at the interest he had shown, and much annoyed at his hint of danger, which I could not but suppose related to Mr. Ashton. What added to my perplexity in the affair was the really knowing nothing, and yet the impossibility of not suspecting something wrong, confirmed as it was by what Betsy had said. How I longed to go to my mother: once a month I was allowed to spend a Sunday with her, but my present difficulties had arisen since my last visit, and it wanted nearly a fortnight before I could go again. I stayed up late that night ironing some caps and collars, and when I went up stairs I heard the hall door opened very gently and some one go out, locking it after them. Miss Barker had heard it too, for she came out of her room, and seeing me, asked me, sternly, what I had been about. I showed her my work, but she went on to ask me, "Whether I had been to the front door, or knew who had opened it." I told her exactly what I heard; and she said very gravely, "I fear, Rose, thou dost not tell me the whole truth, as it is thy duty to do, but this is not a time to speak of it; to-morrow I must have some further conversation with thee, and I trust thou wilt be prepared to speak with openness: we do not wish to be hard upon thee, but thou art too young to have concealments, and I sometimes fear thou hast been tempted from the strict path of integrity."

I could not sleep, I did not know what would be the right course to take, and dreaded the morning, as if I had really participated in some wrong act. Betsy told me Mr. Harry went out, she believed, to the theatre, dressed like other people, and was mortally afraid of his aunt's knowing.

When Miss Barker called me into the parlour after breakfast, I felt almost faint, and after a long examination on her part and refusal on mine, to say any thing that should involve others in blame, beyond allowing that I certainly had heard music, not unfrequently, on Thursday mornings, she was desiring me to leave the house at the end of a month, when Mr. Ashton came in, having heard the last few words. He went up to his aunt and said, "Dear aunt, it is I who have done wrong, nor is this maiden in any way concerned: I have been tempted to indulge my fondness for music, both in going elsewhere to hear it, and in receiving lessons here, when I believed thee to be absent." Miss Barker looked sadly disturbed, as she spoke to me, "I acquit thee, Rose Allen, of having done wrong, except in concealing what thou knew from me, but thou art so young, I will give thee a further trial in our family; and at present thou mayst retire." When I told Betsy what had passed, she seemed alarmed lest her own share in the transgression should come to light, and not without reason, as

she had been long trusted by the sisters, and yet had disobeyed their strict injunctions. Miss Barker's questions drew this from Mr. Harry, and Betsy received warning to leave in a month's time. When I next saw my dear mother, I eagerly asked her opinion: she said, "I had much better have replied simply and frankly to my mistress," but she felt for me, and was very sorry I had been placed in such unpleasant circumstances. I was delighted to see her looking so much better. She had received a letter from Johnny, who was improving, and very happy in his choice of going to sea. Willie came home every Sunday, and gladdened her heart with his generous spirit, and steady progress in learning. Mary, too, was stronger and fatter, and sang me some beautiful songs. Her voice and ear were so superior, we could not help thinking she might become a teacher of music; and my mother said her savings with Miss Evelyn were made with reference to Mary. She then told me that presents of most useful articles came about once a fortnight without any name attached to them, and her only clue was the once finding written on the inside of a paper wrapper, what looked like the word "Grant." I mentioned having seen Mr. Grant lately, and she begged me to be very careful not to acknowledge his acquaintance, unless he should appear decidedly to wish it. The subject seemed to

make her anxious; and I turned it off, by asking whether she had heard from Charles: she said she had, and gave me the letter: it was not written in such good spirits as usual. He had always disliked the condemnatory portions of the Athanasian creed, holding the opinion that conscientious belief would be acceptable hereafter, even should it lead to errors on doctrinal points; and now when he found at Cambridge that he must sign his name to a distinct declaration of entire acquiescence in *all* the Church creeds and articles before entering the Church, the doubt had crossed his mind, whether he could do this honestly: if he could not, then must his dearest earthly wishes be disappointed; for his attachment to the sacred profession, and his reverence for the Church, increased every year. The doubt was yet in its infancy, but it was sufficient to cloud the future, and bewilder his present peace of mind. My mother said she respected the singleness of purpose which dictated his feelings. "My poor son, should it be as he fears, it will be martyrdom to him," and the prospect of *his* suffering made her weep bitterly.

"Dear mother, take comfort, will you not? in remembering that the doubt may pass away, or if it should not, that such a sacrifice would bring its own healing in the consciousness of acting from right and pure motives. Let us bear in mind

the consoling declaration, ‘Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.’” But though I spoke thus, I did not think lightly of the blighting of dear Charles’s earliest and fondest hopes. It was now time for me to return, and my mother promised to send any further tidings of Charles as soon as she received them.

Had I seen no more of Friends than the family with whom I then lived, I should not have appreciated them rightly. Their fearless defence of their peculiar doctrines, their strict veracity, their benevolent lives, and regular discharge of all their duties, commanded, indeed, the greatest respect; but the coldness and extreme composure I have before mentioned always chilled my feelings of affection; and I had not seen any of those who, more lively, though equally precise, united gentleness with warmth of manner, and lively dispositions with much seriousness of mind and occasional stiffness. That night, when attending Miss Barker, she said, “We are very anxious about our nephew: he feels as hardships the restraints which our Society imposes, and thou hast seen what it has already drawn him into: we are desirous of trying the effects of young society, which would show him that, while wishing to maintain wholesome discipline, we do not object to cheerfulness and mirth when kept in due subjection; we have, therefore, invited a young

friend of ours, Ruth Morton, to stay here some weeks, and I wish thee to wait upon her, and see that the white room be ready, with a fire, when she arrives, which I expect will be soon after four to-morrow afternoon."

Miss Morton's father brought her: he was attired in the usual costume, but was a lively, bright-eyed old man. He stayed to tea, and, when going away, after it was over, and putting on his great coat in the passage, I heard him say to Miss Ellen, "I hear thou art troubled about thy nephew, Harry: my dear friend, don't forget that we, too, have been young, and if thou wilt not be offended at an old man's advice, I would recommend thee to allow him moderate indulgence in this love of music, and then thou wouldst find it easier to forbid his seeking it out of the house. Fare thee well: I know thou wilt be careful of my dear Ruth, and she is but young to go out a visiting."

Ruth Morton's was, indeed, a mirthful spirit; her soft golden hair *would* grow in silky curls, and the brush only made it still curlier: her face could not look serious; and its nearest approach to gravity was in her tender moods, perhaps when coaxing her father to walk with her, or read to her, and then its affectionate and pleading glance would deepen into an expression of earnest feeling. She laughed often, because she could not

help it; and you might have fancied she had been born in the sunshine of a summer's day, and that its joyousness pervaded all her after life: yet her playfulness was very gentle, and her quiet, self-possessed manner at times appeared in strong contrast with the lively look and smile which were ready to appear on the smallest occasion: her joyous spirit made her very existence a constant source of pleasure to herself and others. A look or a word was sufficient to control her gayest sallies, and the Misses Barker evidently enjoyed the new life she created by her presence, and their manners softened imperceptibly; indeed not seldom they were excited to laugh and talk in an unusual degree. Her influence over Mr. Harry was great and beneficial. She said it really was rather trying not to have *any* indulgence in sweet sounds, but now, when his aunts had given him permission to take lessons on the flute, she would not allow it to be a hardship, that he was not permitted further gratification. I once heard him say to her, "Thou canst not tell what the trial is, Ruth — thou dost not love music as I do."

"Indeed, cousin Harry (as she always named him), thou art very much mistaken: I did long greatly to play on the piano, but my father and mother did not approve of it, and I felt they knew best, and tried to forget it; but there is

nothing I like so well as music, and if thou wilt not look so very gloomy, which, asking thy excuse, appears to me a *little* ungrateful, I will sing thee a song."

"Do, dear Ruth, and I will not be discontented any more."

While this had passed, I had been helping her to take off her walking things, and then lingered near the door to hear her sing: it was well worth waiting for: though wholly untaught, every note was correct; and the sweet, low, rich tones were more like the calling of a blackbird than any singing I had ever heard; it was exquisite melody, and Mr. Harry made her sing again and again, and even the old ladies in the opposite parlour were also listening: at last Miss Mary came in, and said very kindly, "Come, dear young people, this is very pleasant, but it is now near the time of our evening reading, and I think it will be well for us to collect our thoughts by a little quiet."

"Yes, indeed, I think so," exclaimed Ruth, springing up; and placing a low stool between one of the windows and Miss Ellen Barker, she sat down in her favourite place, and silently watched the clouds as they passed over a brilliant moon.

Mr. Harry never now omitted attending meeting on fifth day, as they called it, and it was

impossible not to perceive his growing attachment to sweet Miss Ruth. It was strange how she brightened the very appearance of the grave old house: she filled glasses with flowers; worked some pretty stools for Miss Barker, and a chair for Miss Ellen; folded the curtains in graceful folds, and brought her beautiful drawings to enliven the evening circle, while she taught Mr. Harry to take pleasure in this sister art.

About this time I had a letter from Charles: he told me what my mother had mentioned, but added, that his convictions of the necessity for his abandoning the Church were daily becoming stronger, and he was already considering what he could undertake in its place; but begged I would keep this to myself for a short time longer, as he wished to settle his future proceedings before telling my mother. I complied, though it was an unnecessary request, for I well knew my dear parent would much rather have seen him a brick-maker than that he should act in the slightest manner contrary to the dictates of his conscience. I sent her word he was well, and more cheerful than when he last wrote.

My situation was a very comfortable one: the wages were paid quarterly—a great convenience, and besides sending something home, I regularly put by 5s. every quarter. My greatest want was some one to speak to of the past, of

my home, and the hopes and wishes which fill a young person's imagination. My fellow-servants were all much older than me, and besides, they did not care for reading, which I still pursued whenever I had the opportunity. Miss Barker lent me many good books, which were of service in introducing me to histories of people and opinions, which I should not otherwise have known existed, and made me aware how each new branch of knowledge is a hidden mine of wealth until explored; and how each new discovery makes us aware of our great previous ignorance and consequent incapacity to form correct opinions. When we made rash assertions, my father used often to laugh, and say, "If you knew more, you would not speak so confidently," and then he would speak of the unkindness such ignorance and presumption led us into, by causing us to judge harshly of others' motives, which to us were as totally unknown as the future of the world to come. I was reaping each year the advantage of his early instructions: every day something he had said became clearer; and I liked to fancy he was still watching over me, and could see how his memory was cherished in the heart of his child.

After three months' visit Ruth Morton left us, and a sad blank it made: the sisters, indeed, had been too long accustomed to their quiet life to

regret the repose, though they sometimes missed the sportive affection, which had so often enlivened them; but Mr. Harry did not thus submit, and as Miss Morton lived in the same town, he spent but few evenings at home. Mr. Morton came to call one day; and I guessed the affair was nearly settled, from the unusual forgetfulness of my mistresses, and the long conversations they held. Miss Morton was only just twenty, and her father wished her to wait a year, but Mr. Harry's extreme impatience and perpetual urging had persuaded him to give way, and allow them to be married in two months. The day after this had been settled, Miss Ellen told me about it, and how pleased they were at the engagement: she said their own plans were now uncertain, as their chief motive for residing in Liverpool had been to make a home for Mr. Harry: they used to live in the North, and might possibly return there, but she would tell me as soon as any thing was fixed.

That evening I saw two strange-looking rough men in the hall, who were shown into the back parlour, and came out in a few minutes with a time piece and silver taper, which they carried away, and which were soon after replaced by new ones. The servants said these people generally came once or twice a year and took away something, and they believed it was because Miss

Barker refused to pay any thing to support the Church. I ventured to ask her whether it was so, and she explained the reasons why they did not approve of a Church connected with the State, and that they could not help the legal course, which was to take goods to the value of the rate, or more, as they generally did: the rate for which the clock and candlestick had been taken was only 2*s.* 6*d.* Though I did not understand all she said, I thought it very hard that people who did not belong to the Church should be obliged to pay for its support; and she also told me that her father was once put into prison for refusing to pay tithes. This firmness increased my respect for their singular sect, and I soon after witnessed another peculiar observance, which pleased me much: this was what they termed a religious visit. Two friends from London came to our town, on purpose to pay visits of this nature to the three hundred families constituting the Liverpool meeting, and the servants were told to come into the parlour, as we usually did morning and evening. A gentleman and lady were sitting with the ladies and Mr. Ashton; and after being silent for perhaps twenty minutes, which had a very solemn effect, the lady spoke of the affectionate interest they felt for the two or three assembled together, and the hope that we might more and more regard the commandment to love one

another, and then she exhorted all in turn upon their particular duties.

The mildness of her voice, the spirit of humility and earnestness which she exhibited, touched me deeply, and I felt as if she had given me new strength to meet the difficulties of life. The gentleman, after another interval of silence, knelt down, while the rest stood, and prayed for us all, especially that our thoughts might not be too much taken up with this world, and that we should remember how soon we might be called upon to enter eternity, and should strive to be prepared to give an account of all our words, thoughts, and deeds.

Every day I was becoming more attached to this really Christian family, and felt truly sorry when Miss Barker told me "they had decided on living in the North: they would take me with them if I liked, but they supposed I should not wish to leave my mother." I told her, "I was sorry to leave them, but I believed it was my duty to stay at Liverpool." And then she said, "I had better look out for another situation, but they would like me to stay over the wedding." She promised to give me a very good character, and seemed to think I should have no difficulty in finding a place.

I pass over the details of my inquiries after a situation, in which I was aided by Miss Barker

and Miss Evelyn. I was soon engaged; and it was fixed that I should go in a fortnight to a Mrs. Stanhope, who lived two miles out in the country. I only saw her once before I went, when she called in great haste, seemed certain I should suit, and asked a good many questions, without always waiting for an answer.

I must say a few words of the wedding. I was told that I might go to the meeting to see it if I pleased. We were unusually at liberty, the ladies and Mr. Harry all going early to Mr. Morton's. I went to the meeting at the appointed time, and took my seat as near as I could to the top of the meeting. Immediately after, the bridal party came in: the bride and bridegroom walked first, arm-in-arm, then the attendants and nearest friends, about sixteen in number, and took their seats in silence. The bride was dressed in a pale dove-coloured silk, without the least ornament, a white, perfectly plain, silk shawl, muslin collar, cuffs, and cap, neatly crimped, without work or lace, and a light stone-coloured silk close bonnet: the bridesmaids were dressed in the same manner; and every thing was so fresh and new, so very neat, and fitted so well, that the general effect was pleasing, almost elegant, though very unlike most wedding parties.

When the silence had continued half an hour, Mr. Harry and Miss Ruth stood up. Mr. Ashton

spoke first, taking her right hand in his, and saying, "Friends, I take this my friend, Ruth Morton, to be my wife, promising, through Divine assistance, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us;" and then Miss Ruth said,—

"Friends, I take this my friend, Henry Ashton, to be my husband, promising, through Divine assistance, to be unto him a loving and faithful wife, until it shall please the Lord by death to separate us."

And they again sat down, and silence followed: it was succeeded by the newly joined couple coming forward to a table to sign their names; after which, such of their friends as wished to do so also signed the certificate, which was given into the lady's care: they did not stay long when this was over, and their departure broke up the meeting. Those who were invited went to Mr. Morton's for breakfast: I helped to wait, and thought it a very lively scene: there was much jesting and mirth; plenty of cake, and breakfast enough for double the number of guests. When I was helping Miss Morton to change her dress, she spoke to me very kindly, and gave me a very nice writing desk. She said she knew I had brothers and sisters to write to, and thought I might like something in which I could keep letters locked up. She could not have given me any thing more valuable; and

I asked her whether I might come and see her after they returned from the lakes. She smiled, and said, "Yes; it would be always pleasant to her to see old friends; and had she known in time that I was leaving my present place, she would have liked me to live with her."

After a friendly farewell from Miss Mary and Miss Ellen, I returned home, and passed two days with my mother, talking over all that had happened during the past year, and walking with her the short distances she was now able to undertake. My sisters spent a day with us, and we were all surprised to see each other looking so much older. Susan, they said, was growing a fine girl, and began to help in the light work: her school-mistress spoke well of her general good conduct and disposition; but though attentive to her lessons, she did not show the proficiency, which most of us had done, and was more clever with her hands than her head.

Mr. Herbert was beginning to show the advance of age: his hair was whiter, and he had given up his long walks. Sometimes he spoke of having a curate, and evidently had hoped that Charles might have been chosen, but my brother having already written to him, and confided the conflict which was passing within him, Mr. Herbert did not now expect that he would enter the Church. He had advised him to become a minister amongst

the Independents; but Charles was not yet prepared to renounce even attending the service which he so dearly loved, and he pursued his studies as formerly, saying he would decide in the course of another month. Our friend Clara was exactly his age and, like other young people, we had often speculated upon the possibility of their being some day united. My sisters thought her out of spirits, and attributed it to the prospect of Charles leaving the Church. We did not speak of this to my mother, knowing that she would discourage such an idea in our altered circumstances; and both of them were so young, and it would be so long before our brother could make an offer, with any propriety, that it was certainly very chimerical; but we liked to fancy it possible, and suspected Charles entertained the same wish. This interchange of thoughts and feelings with my dear family was like drinking from cool wells "in a dry and thirsty land." My sisters enjoyed it much, for they were so separated from us, that their lives would have been very lonely had they not kept together: they were now in the same house, and were considered as part of the farmer's family. They lingered on, chatting with us, until my mother became anxious lest they should be overtaken by darkness, and they said good-by with a few tears which would not be repressed.

I felt sorrowful at again leaving my mother and her pleasant quiet home, to enter another house full of strangers. Mrs. Stanhope's shandry came for me, with the housekeeper, who had been shopping, and it was not easy to find room for my moderate packages, so full was the vehicle of parcels, hampers, and band-boxes. I had thus an opportunity of asking many questions about my future abode, and they were willingly answered; her replies giving me the idea that it would be a very different place to Miss Barker's. My new situation was that of a nursery governess.

CHAP. III.

As the shandry drove up the avenue of Holly Grove, Mr. Stanhope's place, a delicious fragrance filled the air, of new-mown hay and flowers, and reminded me of past times, when such delights were habitual.

I met Mrs. Stanhope as I was going up stairs: she said, "She was very glad I was come, hoped I was quite well, and desired me to take off my bonnet, and come directly to the nursery." I did so, and found there two little girls and two little boys, who I was told were to be my charge. They were good-tempered, high-spirited children, and though tolerably obedient, required constant watchfulness. Their early supper was just come in, and by Mrs. Stanhope's desire I sat down with them, to preside, and keep order, while she was dressing for dinner, assisted by her maid, and alternately giving us directions. Before she was ready, a young gentleman came in to find some one to put on a button: she told me to sew it on, while the children left the table to ask Philip who was coming to dinner, and to beg leave to go into dessert: this was granted, on condition of their being neatly dressed when the time came.

No sooner had Mr. Philip disappeared, than a young lady hastily opened the door, saying, "Oh, mamma, we do so want our tea, and Sarah is so busy dressing Louisa and Caroline, she can't bring it."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Stanhope, breaking the string of her bracelet in her hurry, "I can't spare Carter just now. I dare say Rose Allen will bring it this evening. Just run down, Rose, the housekeeper will tell you all about it." I was obliged to leave the children; and such was the bustle of preparing dinner below, that it was half an hour before tea was ready for Miss Ellis, the governess, and her pupils, Miss Emily and Miss Agnes. When I returned to the nursery, my mistress was gone, and the under-nurse was clearing the table, and vainly endeavouring to keep the children from mischief. They were on an upper veranda, and I was only just in time to prevent an experiment of one of the girls being lowered in a large basket into the garden beneath: it almost made me breathless. Next came an outcry for hats and bonnets, and away we went to the hay-field.

At 7 o'clock I wanted them to come in and dress, but they would not move, until the ringing of a bell summoned us in, and we found the dessert was already on the table, and not one of the children was ready. The two boys persisted in scrambling

through a rough toilet, and rushed down stairs, and the little girls went to Miss Ellis, to ask her if they might have some fruit in the school-room.

At bed-time, when I went for them, they were playing with dolls in the hall, and refused to come, so I proceeded to ask Mrs. Stanhope what was to be done. "Oh, they may stay up half an hour longer, just to-night." I must say they obeyed promptly at the end of that time.

Another bell sounded: "That's for your supper, Miss Allen," said little Ellen: "let us get into bed without brushing and curling our hair, and then you can go down directly almost."

"Thank you, Miss Ellen, but I think that will hardly do; your hair must be made neat." When I at last went to supper, the rest had nearly finished, and Mrs. Grantley did not seem pleased at my delay. I explained what had delayed me; to which she replied, "Ay, there's always some reason." Mrs. Grantley looked tired and over-worked: she said all the days were much alike: if there was not company, there was something else going on; and though there were plenty of servants, and she would say plenty in every way, the place was always in a bustle, and good-natured as Mrs. Stanhope was, she never kept to hours or seasons, but called every one from their work just as the fancy of the moment dictated.

Miss Ellen was the child who had so nearly

been let down in the basket : she was much quieter than the rest, and subject, I soon found, to violent headaches, accompanied by palpitation of the heart, which rendered perfect quiet sometimes absolutely necessary. She became very fond of me : the family were affectionate, and exceedingly good-natured, but they knew little of illness ; and if Mrs. Stanhope came to sit by the child in one of its attacks, she was sure to be called off by some one, or to have forgotten something, and she would go and leave Miss Ellen, just at the moment when she most required soothing and comfort. To me, a sick room was only too natural, and my dear little pet soon liked best to have *me* with her in her hours of pain and languor.

The butler used to amuse me more than was, perhaps, quite right : he bustled more than any one else ; indeed he enjoyed it, and would not have stayed a month at Miss Barker's for any consideration. But to this propensity he joined an unconquerable love of punctuality, which was so severely tried in his present situation, that I do not believe he would have remained in it but for its counterbalancing quality of constant excitement. There were three, four, or five breakfasts, as the occasion might be. The different ages of the family led to much of this perpetual eating and drinking ; but it was increased by irregular hours.

Miss Ellis and her young ladies breakfasted at eight, and it was the most regular of the morning meals: the younger children had the same hour fixed, but nine times out of ten they were gone with Mr. Stanhope to look at something, or, when it was ready in the house, I was ordered to take it into the garden. The nine o'clock repast, for the older members, was generally prolonged till eleven, almost time for the little ones' luncheon; and Mr. Crofts, the butler, would fret and fume, ring bells, and knock at doors, until his face was crimson. Then the numerous and contradictory directions which were often given—horses ordered for riding into town would be countermanded, because Miss Louisa must have the carriage to shop. Mr. Somebody was coming unexpectedly that evening, so the picnic tea in the hayfield must be given up. Mr. Stanhope would leave the house, ordering dinner at six or seven; come back at half past five—the gentleman could not come, “so,” he would perhaps exclaim, “never mind, but just cut some sandwiches to take with the tea in the field;” and while the butler was carrying it out, the young gentlemen would remember an evening engagement of a fortnight's standing, and a car be ordered, the horses, probably, having already been out twice that day.

About this time Miss Ellis was taken ill: she had had a blister on, and I was just about to

dress it, when Miss Fanny said they were going to town with papa, and I must get them ready. "I can wait," said patient Miss Ellis, and, having dressed the children, I was hastening back, when Mrs. Stanhope called, "Rose, just tie my gown; I have sent Carter down stairs." I did so, telling her Miss Ellis was waiting. "Dear me, be quick, that shouldn't be: run to her, and ask if we can bring her any thing from town, and then—yes—then come and tell me, for I must go directly." "No, thank you," said Miss Ellis, "but please Rose come soon, for I am very uncomfortable." I had delivered my message, when Miss Caroline came up, with her dress torn at least two feet by catching on a door handle.

"Indeed, Miss Caroline, I wish you could run it up yourself, for Miss Ellis is waiting all this time about her blister."

"I will do it," said Miss Louisa, and this time I accomplished the blister.

That night Miss Ellis was very faint, and I went to Mrs. Stanhope for some hartshorn. She told me to get it from her dressing-room, and also the medicine which Dr. Harcourt had ordered, and which ought to have been given an hour before. I took the medicine, and seeing that Miss Ellis, after she had taken it, was inclined to sleep, I left the room to put the children to bed.

In about half an hour her bell rang violently.

I ran to her: she said, "she was in terrible pain, and felt very ill." Dr. Harcourt was sent for, and there was a sad trying interval, during which she appeared to be in great agony. We tried fomentations, rubbing, and hot water internally, which last produced slight temporary relief. I could not help thinking that she had taken something wrong; but the bottle had its proper label with her name, and the medicine had been given according to the directions.

Dr. Harcourt at last came. He was very abrupt in his manners, and instantly exclaimed, "She is poisoned." He examined the bottle, and said it was wrong in smell and colour, and he believed we had given her arsenic.

Mrs. Stanhope went out to make investigation, and we applied the remedies now ordered. At one time it seemed nearly over; the convulsions were fearful, and Miss Ellis was evidently frightened, often repeating, "My father! my dear father!" More advice was sent for, to satisfy Dr. Harcourt, as no one else doubted his ability to do all that was in human power: after much exertion, at last he brought her round; and at three in the morning she was fit to be left in the careful charge of a nurse, Dr. Harcourt promising to come again at six o'clock. She had one more slight convulsion, but, on the whole, steadily improved. After breakfast, Mrs. Stanhope desired me to show her exactly where I

had taken the bottle from. This I did, but we could go no further until Dr. Harcourt brought the analysis of what the bottle contained. It proved to be a poisonous mixture for flies; and who had put on a wrong label became the question. The chemist proved his having rightly made up the prescription,—and it seemed very strange how the mistake could have arisen.

Late in the evening the housemaid told me that Carter was ill, and wanted to see me. I had noticed how pale and distressed she had been in the morning, but attributed it to the long night of exertion and anxiety which we had both gone through. She looked very poorly, and I darkened the room, as the light seemed to oppress her. She would not let me call up Mrs. Stanhope, but asked me to give her some hartshorn. After she had taken it she burst into tears, and wept so violently for some minutes as to be unable to speak. I felt alarmed, though it seemed more like mental distress than actual illness.

After sobbing a long time, during which I tried to compose her, she asked me what I should do if I had unintentionally done something wrong? I told her I should certainly confess it immediately.

“But if it would do no good,” she urged.

“I told her I thought we could never be sure that it would not;” and then, unable to help guessing to what she referred, I said, “If in any way

I had caused Miss Ellis's dangerous attack, I should at once say so, for it was impossible not to suppose that some one had made a mistake about the medicine, and we were all liable to be suspected. I am sure you would feel much happier if you would tell all: you could not do such a thing on purpose, and you would never repent speaking the entire truth."

She sighed deeply, and lay quiet for some time. I said I *must* go — the young ladies would be ready for me. But she implored me not to leave her, and she promised that, if I would stay, she would tell me all. I sat down by her, and then with trembling voice, she said she had brought both the medicines and the mixture up stairs, that it was dusk, when her mistress told her "to put a label on the mixture, as it was poisonous, and not to leave it about." She placed it on the dressing-room table, with a number of other bottles and boxes, where Mrs. Stanhope was sorting out the medicine chest. Just then Miss Stanhope said she must come to her directly, and she left every thing. While engaged with Miss Caroline, she heard the two little boys go to the dressing-room, and felt very uneasy. When she returned she sent them out of the room. It had become much darker, and, as she afterwards found, on the following morning, she had pasted the label on the wrong bottle. The direction on

Miss Ellis's medicine had been only her name, and "The draught as directed." She noticed that it was partly come off, and one of the little boys, when she questioned him, allowed they had been playing with the bottles, and had taken off several marks. She then showed me the bottle with the label of poison, which she had reason to believe was Miss Ellis's medicine. They were about the same size, and not *very* different in colour. She said she dared not tell Mrs. Stanhope, having disobeyed her orders in the first instance. I told her, though I felt much for her, that nothing *could* justify her not telling exactly what had happened: that she was giving much trouble to our master, who was trying to find out something about the affair, and was exposing those who were innocent to blame. She ended with asking me to inform our mistress. This was very unpleasant, but I could not refuse the poor creature, who had really fretted herself ill.

Nothing could be kinder than Mrs. Stanhope, who blamed herself for leaving so many things about, and for her thoughtlessness in calling me away from the children, which had occasioned the boys being left at liberty to go where they liked; and said she hoped that the regret which Carter felt at having occasioned Miss Ellis such severe suffering would make her careful not to neglect orders in future. She went herself to see her—and thus

ended this almost tragic affair, which had caused so much pain and trouble.

The next day Miss Ellen was very unwell: she had been frightened by Miss Ellis's illness, and one of her bad headaches was the consequence. I always knew when they were coming on, by a peculiar dark look about her eyes, and her starting at the least noise. She was very fond of play, and never gave up until compelled; then she would call me, ask me to shut the door gently, and put her to bed, where one of her dolls generally accompanied her: she was very sensitive to sound at these times, and the tone of thankfulness with which she used to express her gratitude when I did any thing very quietly used often to bring tears to my eyes. The next request was to be sung to in low tones, or have poetry read till she fell asleep or the pain became too great to attend; then she would put one hand into mine, while I rubbed her very slowly and softly. When she had been alarmed, as in the present case, she could not bear me to leave her for many hours, and started, from each attempt to doze, with strange uncomfortable dreams. "If you should ever leave us, Rose, you will come and see me sometimes; no one nurses me like you, though I like mamma to kiss me before I go to sleep: just read some verses, or a hymn."

I repeated several, and thought she was sleep-

ing ; but she said, when I paused, “ You did not say whether you really *would* come to see me.”

“ I hope so, dear Ellen ; I will come if I am able, you may be quite sure.”

“ Thank you, thank you : now kiss my eyes, they are so hot.”

This was a childish fancy, which generally betokened the approach of drowsiness ; she called it sealing her eyes, for then she did not want to open them again : she was soon asleep, and I took out a letter I had received that morning from my eldest sister, but which I had had no time to read. Its contents surprised and delighted me ; it was a very long letter, containing the history of an attachment and engagement to a neighbouring farmer ; a young man whom our father had always said would do well, and who had been only prevented from looking out for a wife by some debts of his father’s, which he determined to pay : this was now accomplished, and my excellent, good-tempered, handsome sister, was the chosen one : she had long liked him, and this offer soon deepened the prepossession into warm affection : she only hesitated because he was so much better off than we were ; but this he declared was a positive insult, and unworthy of the good parents who had given us education fitting for any farmer’s wife. He backed his suit by requesting her mother and sisters to reside with them, and then my

sister gave her consent. She went home to speak to my mother, who was much gratified by the prospect of her daughter's happiness, but steadily refused to reside with them, partly on Mary's account, whose schooling and intended master for music must not be neglected, and also that she did not think it a good plan for many reasons: but she approved of my second sister, Fanny, living with them, and Farmer Rainforth pressed so much for Susan that to this also she consented; Susan was, therefore, to leave Miss Herbert, which they were sorry for; but as Charles was likely to be soon there as a *visiter* to Mr. Herbert, my mother thought it was, perhaps, fortunate it should be so; and as my sister would be so well off, it would be but a light charge for two or three years to come. I was asked to go to the wedding, which was to take place the following week; and, if possible, to come a day or two before, as we met so seldom. This letter made me very thankful; Charles was so far off, and my other brothers so young, that we were greatly in want of an older male relative; and my dear sister was so happy on her own account, and at being able to offer two of her family a comfortable home, that my pleasure was unmingled. She concluded her letter with a hint that our second sister was not unlikely to follow her example, but of this she had no authority to speak. I hoped I should be allowed to go

to the marriage; but I did not think it would be right to ask for more than one day, as Ellen was so poorly, and so dependent upon me, and I saw that it would be very inconvenient to the family.

The next day my darling was better, but languid, and unable to rise: when she heard Dr. Harcourt's voice, who came to see Miss Ellis, she entreated that he might come and see her; he came in, and she asked him directly whether she was very ill. He said, "No I think not; but you must be very quiet, and listen to nice reading, and not think about this little heart, which will only beat faster if you do."

He then told her some amusing stories, and left her more satisfied. Mrs. Stanhope asked him somewhat anxiously if he thought there was any cause for alarm, but he said "No—she is delicate, and will require care, but this palpitation only arises from weakness, and is easily excited; she will, I think, grow out of it; but when the present attack is over, I strongly recommend her going to the sea-side, with a small and cheerful party: she should not be too lonely, though the more tranquil every thing is kept about her the better."

In a day or two, when she was much as usual, I asked permission to see my sister married; Mrs. Stanhope evidently did not like to refuse.—I knew that the inconvenience would be great,

as they wished me to take Miss Ellen to Crosby the next day but one: and at last I made an effort, while my mistress was considering, and said I would give it up, on Miss Ellen's account.

She replied with warmth, "I am really very much obliged to you: if you *can* give it up I will gladly let you go to see your sister when you come back, and spend some days with her."

It was so agreed, and I wrote home to say how matters stood: both my mother and sister expressed much regret that I should not be with them, but said I had decided rightly, and they loved me all the better for it.

We were now very busy packing: Miss Caroline and Miss Louisa, Miss Ellen, a nursemaid, and myself, composed the party; the others were to come down occasionally. Dr. Harcourt thought it best that the rest of the young ones should not be with Ellen at present, and he also objected to Miss Ellis, as being still too ill to make her a desirable companion for a nervous little girl. It was a very lovely day, early in September, when we left the beautiful wooded grounds of Holly Grove, and drove over rough stony roads to our new lodgings, which looked over a bare expanse of sea and sand, only relieved by a distant view of the Welsh mountains. In the evening we beheld a glorious sunset, and soon afterwards Ellen was charmed with the revolving light and

its changing colours, like a magic lantern, which was kindled at the top of the lighthouse, on the opposite side of the river, as soon as it was dusk.

We passed a quiet pleasant week, during which she rapidly improved, and began to bathe, accompanied not unfrequently by a large dog, which, in compliance with her earnest entreaties, had been brought with us. Sometimes I saw what looked like Jane Grant and her brother on the sands, and once they came near enough for certainty, but they did not approach within speaking distance, and I could not help thinking that they purposely avoided me. I asked our bathing woman, who was a great gossip, who they were; and she told me that they were orphans, and lived in one of the small villas near to us with their uncle Mr. Wilson, who was a rich jeweller. They were much liked, and she repeated many anecdotes of Edward Grant's considerate and generous kindness; the uncle too was kind in his way, but proud, and did not always approve of his nephew's readiness to hold intercourse with any one he met. Another day she brought me some flowers, and a message from Jane—that circumstances prevented their becoming more acquainted with me at present, but she hoped that sometime they should be more at liberty. The bathing woman said the brother and sister asked many questions as to how I looked, whether I seemed happy, and with whom I was

living at Crosby? I am afraid this welcome message did me no good. I fancied now that Mr. Wilson must have forbidden their holding any communication with our family, and this idea introduced another, viz. the supposition that they wished to have more; and my mind fed upon these thoughts until they might have endangered my peace of mind, had not other subjects arisen to divide my attention.

The two young ladies generally walked out in the evening, when the shore was occupied by many who enjoyed the cool air and leisure to ride and talk. From our first coming to Crosby, they had never gone out at this time without seeing a young gentleman, who, though not coming so near as to be impertinent, followed in their wake, and evidently watched their proceedings. As time went on, he became bolder, and came forward to offer his services whenever there was the least opening: the sisters repressed him as much as possible, but with little effect, the excess of his humility baffling all attempts to discourage him, for he seemed delighted to obtain a word even in rebuke. They were more annoyed when he began to walk close to the little garden round our lodgings. He seemed always there, ready with a low bow to open the gate if they went out, or leaning on the low wall when they were visible at the windows. Once he asked me if I thought the ladies would permit him to call, but I nega-

tived this very decidedly. The matter was too ridiculous to write about to Mr. Stanhope, and yet it was very tiresome to the young ladies to be so persecuted. One night I heard slight noises about the house at eleven o'clock, and Miss Louisa came to the nursery and asked me to call the man servant, who had come with us, more for protection than any work there was for him to do. He went out, and said there were two or three people on the sands, and one very near the garden, but as he looked like a *gentleman*, the man did not think he would be likely to do any harm there. I looked through the window, and saw Miss Stanhope's faithful squire in the garden gazing at a light still burning in her room. I told her this in the morning, and she sent a message to the policeman, who came round every half hour, to be on the watch, and permit no one to come inside the gate. The next attempt was sending flowers, sometimes very fine ones: unfortunately these were received twice without the ladies suspecting the donor, but afterwards they were refused.

A lady arrived at the next house, with whom the Misses Stanhope were slightly acquainted: her name was Wallingford, and she came to return their call, accompanied, to their amazement, by this same young gentleman, whom she introduced as Sir James Vernon. Miss Stanhope was exceedingly

vexed: she saw it would give an undoubted licence to some degree of attention, which she thought, from his former conduct, would be unpleasant, and she determined to inform Mrs. Stanhope if the opportunity should be presumed upon. He called the next day, but was told the ladies were alone, and did not wish to receive visitors. He now joined them when they went out, which they gave up in consequence, except in a carriage or on horseback; but he one day contrived to address Miss Stanhope when he was in company with a friend, whom he tried to introduce, and spoke to him as if on terms of intimacy with the ladies. It was just dinner time; but Miss Stanhope delayed no longer, and, writing a hasty note to her father, desired the footman to ride off directly to Holly Grove: he went to see about his horse, saying, "I suppose I must do without food to-day, for I was sent out at breakfast time, and am only just come in." This was too much the habit of the family, and arose simply from want of thought. None took more trouble for their servants: they would exercise self-denial for them, in short, do every thing but think for them, and the consequences were often the same as of positive unkindness.

No one liked to complain, where help was so readily granted; besides, there were enough to perform all the work with ease and comfort, had

there only been more method and care in the arrangements. As it was, most of us were more or less overworked, and almost ready to leave those to whom we were in the main attached. They hurried themselves in the same way, and quite as much. That same evening Mr. Stanhope came riding up in haste: he seemed both angry and amused, and what added to the absurdity of the affair, was the baronet's disappearance. He remained at Crosby till the afternoon of the following day, but Sir James was not to be seen; and when Mr. Stanhope called on Mrs. Wallingford for his address, which proved to be the Waterloo hotel, and went there, he was told that the baronet was out, and not likely to return for some hours. "So he laughed, and he rode away;" and in the evening the young ladies ventured out for a sunset ramble. They once thought there was an apparition in the distance of the persevering baronet; but if it was, he did not come near them.

In the afternoon Miss Ellen was looking for shells, assisted by a fine little boy, the son of our bathing-woman. He was very proud to do any thing for the "pretty little lady," as he called her. His mother came down to see after him, and I was struck with the shrewd knowing smile with which she asked if Mr. Stanhope was gone: she had hoped he would have had a bathe.

When we returned to the house, I put Miss Ellen to bed, and then sat with the young ladies, helping to trim some bonnets. A brilliant moon shone full into the room, and the opposite hilly shore, dark and massive, contrasted beautifully with the dancing waters, which quivered and sparkled in the soft light, and made it difficult to attend to our work. Soon we heard the sound of music: it was a guitar well played, and accompanied by a rich manly voice. It was impossible to resist the enjoyment of these sweet sounds on such a night, when the perfect stillness caused each word and note to be distinctly audible: but Miss Stanhope extinguished the light, and told us to speak in whispers. The music continued for some time, and was repeated for two or three nights; after which Sir James made another call, which was again declined, and he then recommenced his attendance out of doors. The young ladies informed Mr. Stanhope of this, and Mr. Philip came down to us for a few days; but the baronet did not seem to shun him, though he kept a more respectful distance, and was pleased when Mr. Philip addressed him. He took the opportunity to declare an unconquerable attachment to Miss Stanhope, and requested permission to pay his addresses in form. His bombastic language, and his protestations of extreme diffidence, combined with his great assurance,

amused Mr. Philip so much that he laughed outright ; and Sir James became very angry, refusing to take any answer except from Miss Stanhope herself. "Very well, then, come with me," returned her brother, leading him into the cottage, where tea was ready, and introducing him with much mock solemnity, "as a highly honoured friend, who had condescended to take tea with him, and requested permission, as soon as it was over, to speak to Miss Stanhope on matters of grave importance."

I was going to retire, as I generally did when Mr. Philip came in, but Miss Louisa begged me to stay, saying in a whisper, "Never mind my brother ; you will like to see the end of the affair." Tea passed over in a quiet showing-off of the poor baronet by the relentless Mr. Philip, who when it was finished, gave his arm to Miss Louisa, and, desiring Miss Ellen and me to follow, left Sir James Vernon to say whatever he wished to Miss Stanhope. He stayed a quarter of an hour, longer than Miss Louisa expected, and then issued forth, looking very red and very indignant. He bowed haughtily to Mr. Philip (who said he wished him all possible happiness), and, asking for Mr. Stanhope's address, withdrew. Miss Stanhope told me, some time afterwards, that he had applied to her father, who declined any interference after his daughter's positive refusal. We saw no more of him at Crosby.

Mrs. Stanhope came to see how we were going on. She looked unusually grave for her, and was quiet and absent in manner: the young ladies, too, seemed anxious after she was gone, and in a few days we received a summons to return to Holly Grove. As usual, no time was given for preparation, and we packed up as fast as we could, so as to be ready to go back the same evening. I was pleased to see that Miss Ellen bore this so well: she had now been a fortnight without headache, and the present hurry did not produce any palpitation. We were glad to see trees again, rich in every variety of autumnal tints, and again we took our places in the large family at home: but a change had come over the household; the bustle had become graver;—there were numerous dinner parties, with much gaiety and display; yet we all felt that something was wrong: and then the parties ceased. Mr. Stanhope and his sons went early to town, often not returning until late at night, and all seemed gloomy. At last the truth came out,—and I may as well relate here the particulars which I afterwards learned; as, at the time it happened, we only knew that Mr. Stanhope had met with some great reverse of fortune.

Mr. Stanhope had weathered the crisis of 1825, and had since been so successful that he indulged in the most profuse expenditure, and the most reckless speculation. He was now comparatively

ruined; and his only consolation was the knowledge that no one out of his own family was injured by his folly and extravagance. His great wealth paid every debt, but he was left without any future provision, except Mrs. Stanhope's settlement of eight hundred per annum. I should not say that he had only one consolation, for he had much in the good humour and courage with which his large and luxuriously brought up family met their reverses. Miss Ellen packed up all her presents and treasures, and asked her papa to sell them, and keep the money: his eldest sons looked out for situations, and his daughters were ready to do the same, but this was thought unnecessary. Holly Grove was advertised for immediate sale. Miss Ellis and most of the servants received notice that they were no longer wanted, and preparations were at once commenced for moving into a small house in town. I would have gladly staid by them, but I was not fitted for real house-work, and Mrs. Stanhope said the young ladies would teach the little ones. She allowed me to stay until they left the place, and with true delicacy did not offer payment for the last month, during which she well knew that I had offered to remain from real affection to the family. How is it that the benevolent rich so seldom reflect that the poor are endowed with feelings like their own, and love to give, what alone they have to give—their time

and services on such occasions? Poor Miss Ellen! she cried when she found I was going, and so did I to leave her: I promised to see her soon, and she gave me, as a parting gift, what I knew she dearly valued, a little model of a writing desk, filled with miniature note paper and envelopes. I hoped to prevail on her to take it back, some day, but she sobbed so bitterly at the idea of my leaving it behind, that I could not then refuse: she helped me to pack, folding up and putting in all she could lay her hands upon, and came with me in the shandry, the only vehicle left, when I went to my mother's house. Here she came in to ask where I was going to sleep; seeing my mother diverted her attention. Mary, too, was at home, and sang for her two of her prettiest songs. I brought her some biscuits, but her little heart was too full; she could not eat, and she began to cry again when obliged to say good-by.

CHAP. IV.

It was early in December when I came home ; and, as I was far from well, it was fixed that I should remain there the rest of the month, and look out for some place which I could enter upon early in the new year. An opportunity occurred of my going to a concert of sacred music, where some celebrated singers were to perform : I did not think such amusements suitable in our circumstances, and would have declined, but my mother urged my accepting the invitation : she said she was not afraid of my becoming dependent upon that species of excitement, and she thought it better to take advantage of the relaxation offered, which was the best of its kind. It was with a beating heart that I entered the precincts of a theatre : it did not seem exactly adapted to the sacred performance of the evening, but all surrounding circumstances were forgotten when the music began. The first notes were almost painful. Selections from different oratorios came in turn ; and some parts of the Bible were ever afterwards heightened in interest by this realisation of feelings, too deep for words, and not fully awakened

until developed by the beauty of the music : Haydn's overture to the Creation, the pastoral symphony from the Messiah, and the Hallelujah chorus, seemed almost more than weak mortality could sustain, and only the relief of tears could have enabled me to sit through them. For years this concert gave me intense pleasure : I never forgot the magnificent passages which I have mentioned, and they cheered many a lonely hour, and soothed much vexation of spirit through after life. It rained heavily when we left the theatre ; and as we waited in the passage, until a car could be procured, one of my companions said to me, " You will be cold, Rose : why did you not bring a warmer shawl ? "

A moment afterwards, a voice I well remembered came behind me, and some one wrapping a shawl round me said, " My sister sends you this, and begs you will keep it ; good-by ! "

I turned, but he was gone ; and I caught a glimpse of Jane Grant, as she took her brother's arm, and they stepped out into the street. I could not help thinking some fatality must be always bringing these young people, whom I might not speak to, wherever I went. Notwithstanding their attentive care, I took a violent cold, and the next day inflammation of the lungs came on, and for two or three days my life was in much danger. I did not know the doctor who came to

see me, but he had attended my mother occasionally, since she had removed to her present lodgings. He was very kind to me, and by his carefulness, and cheering mode of speaking, my mother kept up wonderfully: his manner always showed much interest in his patients, and, though in such great practice that every moment was valuable, and he used to rush up the stairs two steps at a time, yet he was as gentle, quiet, patient, and attentive, when he entered the sick room, as if he had nothing to do but to sit there as long as you wished. He soon discovered my anxiety about my mother, and took the kindest care of her, always telling her she would not be able to attend upon me if she did not follow his instructions; and she really was less overdone than I could have dared to hope. I never knew a nurse like her: she seemed to know all my wants and desires by intuition, hardly ever asking a question, — always appearing at liberty to remain with me, and obviating, as if *she* felt them, all annoyances. Her voice like a pleasant charm, soothed my nervous irritation, — while her soft hand seemed to lessen the weary pain in my feverish limbs. When the worst of the illness was over, she generally read the Psalms to me every night, and I often dropped asleep with her hand in mine: she slept by me, and when lying awake at night I used often to beguile the time by looking

forward to her smile and kiss in the morning, which seemed to begin the day so peacefully.

When I was able to walk into the next room, my married sister Sarah came to see me, and warmly pressed us to come to her house, as Mr. Barlow had strongly recommended my going into the country: I said I would come, if my mother would: she consented, and we agreed to take Mary, as it was close upon her holydays, and Sarah insisted that there was room for all, and that we did not know what a large rambling old house she lived in. The day before we were to go, Mrs. Evelyn called, bringing some exquisite greenhouse flowers, and asked if I could see her: I was only too glad, for I had often wished for this pleasure. My mother had seen her not unfrequently; but well as I knew *Miss Evelyn*, I had always been from home when her mother called. She looked as lovely as I expected from the glance which I had of her in the carriage two years before: her hair was perfectly white, and the union of dignity, sweetness, and mind, in her countenance, was beautiful to look upon. Her benevolence was unbounded, and always guided by a refinement of feeling, which made it a pleasure to accept her kindness; for which she would express her gratitude, as if she had been the person obliged. She talked to me as if I had known her all my life, and I found myself telling her of the

dreams, which I had experienced in my illness, of my dear father : and how pleased I had felt, when it was thought that I should soon be with him : I spoke of my mother, and all she had been to her children, — a subject I did not often care to dwell upon to others, — and her eyes filled with tears as she listened. She said she wished she could have offered me a situation in her own family, but she would look out for one for me, and then invited me to go and recruit my strength, under her care, at Larchwood ; but when she heard of our intended plan, she insisted on our taking her carriage for the little journey to Hale : it would be warmer than a hired coach, and easier, as the roads were very rough for my mother to travel ; we accepted this generous offer, and then she took her leave.

“ Oh, mother, I wish I was going to live with Mrs. Evelyn.”

“ I wish you were, my dear child, perhaps you may some time, though there seems no likelihood of it at present.” Just then, Willie came in, so much grown that I did not know him : he was now fourteen, and his fine, open, intelligent countenance, his frank, confiding manners, and enthusiastic love of learning, made him a truly captivating boy, and I was astonished at the progress he had made. In two years more, he was to become an under-teacher in the school, still pursuing his own

studies. His holydays he had been invited to spend in London, with one of his schoolfellows, who had no brother for a companion at home, and whose fondness for Willie had induced his father to give my brother this invitation, accompanied by a munificent gift of ten pounds for the necessary expenses that he would incur. Willie was delighted at the prospect of seeing all the sights: he wished we could have gone with him; but we assured him his descriptions would do as well, and we should expect him to write to us: this he promised to do, and we proceeded to make a list of all he would want for his expedition.

He soon interrupted us to ask me if he should tell me something about Fanny? "Certainly, it is very long since she wrote to me, but Sarah said the other day she was quite well."

"Yes, yes, I know that," said Willie; "but I spent last Sunday at Farmer Rainforth's, and when tea was ready, Sarah told me to look for Fanny, which I did; and *where* do you think I found her?—actually in the large parlour in which we were sitting, but snugly hid behind the curtains, and looking at a brilliant display of stars and the northern lights, in company with the church Clerk, who, as you may remember, sang so well, and whom we used to call Ezekiel, because he was so grave and melancholy: he looks much brighter now—I suppose Cupid enlivens him."

“Come, Willie, don’t talk so fast; it’s time you were off, if you mean to be measured for your new clothes to-day?”

“I shan’t go, unless you tell me whether I am right.”

“Indeed, I do not know,” and my mother said, “*I* have heard nothing of it,—so you have the glory of the first communication, should there be any truth in the matter—now go before it is quite dark.”

“You’ll find it’s true, and I’d wager my dear little Virgil against any thing you like, that I’m right,” was Willie’s rejoinder, as he ran down stairs, his spirits too high to be manageable. The next day he came to bid us good-by, as we were packing ourselves and our goods in Mrs. Evelyn’s roomy, comfortable carriage. It was one of those mild, still sunny days, which sometimes precede the first hard frost; and we enjoyed the drive, though, as we approached our old home, and recognised every tree, house, and turn in the road, my mother suffered much. She spoke little, and turned pale as we entered the village, but she did not give way; and smiled as she entered Sarah’s house. My sister stood waiting to receive us, and had some hot elder wine ready for my mother, which greatly revived her. Sarah looked very happy: she was much fatter than formerly, and enjoyed exercising her hospitable feelings, in

welcoming us to her own home, where she was the busy mistress of many out-door farm servants, two in the house, and a large assemblage of live stock.

As I looked at Fanny's bright, quiet smile, and slight blush when we met, I thought Willie's surmise was probably true; and she had that indescribable expression of inward happiness, which often betrays the consciousness of dawning affection for one individual above all others. Being much tired with the drive, I went to bed. I was still far from strong, and was glad when Fanny brought up some tea, and sitting down by my bed, said she would have hers with me: after asking many questions about my late illness, she spoke of herself, and the hopes which filled her heart. She loved William, and he had made her an offer, but she did not like to accept him, until her mother should see him, and give her consent, and she poured out the whole history of their attachment, and where they had met — often interrupting herself to ask if I was tired; but how could I feel tired, while listening to, and joyfully receiving the confidence of, a dear sister upon such a subject? At last she left me, saying she must tell our mother that night, for William was coming the next day. It was a fortunate circumstance for my mother; as the return to Hale could not be otherwise than very painful, though it made her

the witness of Sarah's happiness: this new offer engrossed both time and attention.

William was so undemonstrative and retiring in his manners, that we almost wondered how he could have wooed and won our shy Fanny; but his general coldness perhaps made the contrast more striking when he became her lover; and we soon discovered that there was great warmth and energy when he did speak.

In a few days my mother gave her glad consent, and we were pleased and amused by William's excessive gratitude on the occasion. His roomy, well-furnished cottage was ready to receive his wife at any time, and he earnestly pleaded that she might become his own, while we stayed at Farmer Rainforth's. This request told both ways with Fanny: she would have dearly liked us to be with them when she was married, but she also did *not* like to leave her mother, from whom she had been so long separated. Another influence was, however, brought forward, which proved conclusive: this was a letter from Charles, stating that his intended visit to the Herberts would commence in the following week, and that he should not be able to stay longer than ten days; so it was fixed that the wedding should take place while he was in the neighbourhood.

We were very impatient to see Charles, so much had occurred since we parted; and his

life had latterly been a melancholy one, owing to the relinquishment of his earliest and fondest wish. He had left college about two months, and since then had been in London, where he obtained an engagement as temporary assistant to an aged minister belonging to the Independents. He was cheered by the great and unexpected success which had attended his beginning to preach: he was already a favourite with the congregation, and it was rumoured that the charge would be offered to him, should the present minister continue unable to resume his duties. We were, of course, much gratified, but not much surprised, he seemed so fitted to be a clergyman. He was very eloquent; his earnest devotional feelings easily found words that conveyed them to the hearts of others; and his voice and appearance were both impressive, the more so, because he was himself almost unconscious of their effect.

The sorrow which he had experienced in the death of his father, the sadness of prolonged separation from all that he loved, the bitter separation from the church which he revered, seemed to have sanctified his spirit, and to have made him, at two-and-twenty, a minister to others, capable of understanding their trials and afflictions; he had also been well trained, by his excellent parents, in self-denial, benevolence, and ready sympathy, with the errors and failings,

the joys and the requirements, of all with whom he held intercourse.

We rejoiced that he had not been with us during the hardest part of our struggle to live, and that he would now find us in comparative ease and comfort.

Susan (little no longer) and Mary, were each working a slipper to greet his arrival, and we wrote by Fanny's desire to tell him previously of her engagement. He came on the day that he had first named, and we saw him on his way to Mr. Herbert's. He was greatly altered, taller, thinner, paler, and looked as if he had gone through much discipline; but when he smiled, he appeared more like his former self. He had many inquiries to make, and brought a welcome letter from Johnny, who, by this time, was on his way to England. Willie, whom he had seen in London, was quite wild with pleasure, and declared he could not find time to write. We, too, had many questions to ask of Charles: he told us the details of his long and painful struggle before leaving Cambridge; his doubts at first, as to what *was* his duty, — his grief, when it became clear to himself that he *must* leave the church, — the arguments of professors and clergymen on the subject, — the ridicule of many of his fellow-collegians; and, at last, the final parting from college, its hopes, and the few dear friends that

he had made there ; especially the poor scholar with whom he had been so intimate, and who seemed nearly heart-broken at the leave-taking. Then he spoke of the loneliness of London, without a friend to consult or speak to ; and told how, as a last resource, he had called upon different ministers, and that one of them had requested Charles to preach for him on the following Sunday, as he was too ill himself to do duty. He did so, having been ordained an Independent minister, for which his studies had well qualified him : this was his first step to success, and he had continued at the same chapel. The old minister was not likely to live long, and could he obtain the situation, it would bring him an income of 120*l.* per annum ; enough for his simple habits, but he feared too little to marry upon. He said the last words with a melancholy smile, and got up to go to Mr. Herbert's : we did not detain him, feeling certain that he referred to Clara, and knowing that he must be impatient to see her again. I had asked Sarah how they were at the parsonage : she looked sad as she told us, that Mr. Herbert was evidently declining : he still preached, but a curate conducted the service, and Clara seldom left him ; and if she did for a short walk, she always seemed restless and anxious to return. Sarah was sure that she loved Charles, but doubted if she would ever become the wife

of one who was not a member of the Established Church.

A short time afterwards, Clara came in: she embraced us with her usual affection, and said she had taken the opportunity of coming to see us, while Charles was sitting with her father.

“How is your dear father, Clara?” said my mother. She answered with composure, though repressing evident emotion, that he was becoming constantly weaker: she thought he might possibly be spared to them some time longer, but she did not expect ever to see him better again. She turned to other subjects, and left the house without mentioning Charles. Susan went with her, glad to have a walk in her company, and being very desirous to take her Christmas offering of some warm knitted stockings to Mr. Herbert.

For the next few days we were very busy with preparations for the wedding, which was to take place on Christmas day; a fancy of William’s and Fanny’s, in which we did not all participate. They were married immediately before the service of the day, the Herberts coming to the farm for the Christmas and wedding dinner: it was the last time that our old pastor left his own house, though he lived for more than a year longer. The bride and bridegroom walked home about three o’clock in the afternoon, escorted by a family procession, who left them at the door of their cottage.

A fresh cold, though a slight one, still prevented my going out; and in the evening, when merry games were going on down stairs, Charles came to my room, where my mother was sitting, saying he wanted to tell us both a long story about himself. We assured him of our readiness to hear; and he sat down in his favourite position by his mother's knee, and began with his arrival at Mr. Herbert's. Clara had met him in the passage: she seemed pleased that he was come, but he soon saw that she was thinking more of her father than of him. She was afraid he would be shocked at the change apparent in every feature, and had come out to prepare him for the alteration, and to beg him, as much as possible, to avoid all subjects of harassing conversation: this he promised, and accompanied her into the room. Mr. Herbert received him as warmly as ever, saying, with a smile, "Time you came, Charles—I shall not stay here much longer."

After tea, Mr. Herbert slept in his arm-chair, and then Charles ventured to ask Clara if she was glad to see him: she replied with embarrassment, but appeared anxious to hear from himself every thing connected with his leaving the church: he told her all, and the interest which she manifested encouraged him to proceed; and he then asked her if it would be an insuperable bar to his aspiring to her hand, — pleaded his early and in-

creasing attachment, but told her his probable income was so small, he feared it was great presumption to hope that she would link her fate with his. She said she could not deny that the trial was very great to her, of his having left the church, but that this alone would not decide her to refuse him. His income, she assured him, would suffice for her wishes, provided she felt affection, but this was not the case: she declared that she had no attachment for any one but her father, and that nothing should induce her to leave him; and this was all that he could obtain.

Two days passed over, Charles becoming more than ever in love, and more despairing, as he witnessed the entire self-devotion and absorption of her mind and heart to and in her father. One day when she was absent, Mr. Herbert told him that he was aware of his feelings for Clara; and, after stating his warm approbation of the noble sacrifice which Charles had made, he said there was no one whom he should have liked so much for a son; and he expressed the comfort that it would be during his last days, that Clara should be engaged to him. Thus supported, Charles ventured to again introduce the subject, telling her at the same time what her father had said. There was a long pause: she buried her face in her hands, and wept some time, before she could speak: then with great agitation, she said, "Charles, should God see fit to take my dear,

dear father to another and better world, I would then listen to you, but not now; be satisfied that no one else could have drawn this admission from me: it is my duty and my pleasure to stay with my father, and you will injure your own cause if you urge me further."

Charles assured her that he would not, except on her father's account; and besought her, if, indeed, she loved him, not to deprive her father of the consolation which it would be to him to know, that she was not left without a protector. She had risen to leave the room, and he was standing beside her: she hesitated for a moment, and then placing her hand in his, whispered, "Tell my father, that while he lives, I will never leave him, but should he be taken from me, you shall be my protector." Charles told us, that Mr. Herbert was much delighted; and, feeling sure that he should not live long, he had made no objection to Clara's remaining with him for the present. Charles said he must set out for London to-morrow, as he was to preach there on Sunday. We were to tell Sarah and Fanny, but no one else: this was Clara's particular request. How warmly we congratulated Charles! indeed our mother was so happy in seeing his happiness, that she seemed to imbibe new life, and she even proposed joining the rest of the family at supper, which had just been announced by Susan.

When Charles was gone we began to think of returning home, much against Sarah's wishes; but it was time for me to inquire about a situation, and we sent, as Mrs. Evelyn had particularly begged we would, for her carriage to take us back. We left Mary in the country for the remainder of her holydays, as I did not mean to leave home for another fortnight, and it was a good opportunity for her to be with her sisters, and obtain some country air. Frost had commenced; and as we approached Liverpool, it seemed as if every pond and puddle was occupied by skaters. Our kind landlady had taken care to have a good fire ready for us, and very welcome it was, for we felt not only cold, but lonely, after living in so large a family circle. My mother was anxious that I should stay at home, if Charles obtained this chapel appointment, as he would not then require the 20*l.* which he had received from us, while at college. I could not consent to this, and I reminded her that Mary's superior musical talents would require an expensive education, and that when it was finished, I would come and live at home, thankful in the mean time to have such a prospect of happiness.

In a couple of days I was well enough to walk to Mrs. Bennet's, at Aigburth, a lady who I had heard wanted a young woman to wait upon her. When I knocked at the door, the servant said,

“ Mrs. Bennet never saw any one if she did not feel in the humour, and she guessed *that* would be the case to-day.” She left me waiting in the cold passage for at least ten minutes, and then came back to say Mrs. Bennet wished me to call the next day. This was tiresome, as the walk was long, and consumed both time and strength; but I went, and was ushered in, after again waiting fully ten minutes. Mr. Bennet was seated, with a newspaper, on one side of the fire, his left knee propped up, under an attack of gout. Mrs. Bennet was on the other side, nursing a fat poodle dog. She asked a multitude of questions about my former places and the rest of my family, commenting upon my answers to Mr. Bennet, as if I had not been present. I asked, what my duties with her would be. “ Nothing heavy,” she replied: “ there’s my old china in this room, in my bedroom, and in the closet, which must be dusted every day: there’s breakfast for the dog, cat, and parrot: indeed, all their meals you would have to prepare; and my dear poodle can’t eat meat unless it is nicely minced. They must be washed every other day, and combed every day; and poodle must go a walk when it is sunshiny, only you must never let him wet his feet, but carry him across the streets. They must sleep in your room, as I should not feel easy for them to be left alone. Then there’s my caps; you

would wash and make them, and I always change them three times a week. Of course you would have to attend my toilet; but that would not take long, as I am never more than an hour morning and evening, and two hours before dinner. You can write, I suppose?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"I should want you to write always to tradespeople, and invitation notes for my whist parties. Do you like reading?"

"Yes, Ma'am! very much."

"I don't know, then, whether you'll suit me. The last maid liked reading, and she kept my poor Polly waiting for his supper twice in one month; and sometimes she forgot to wash the cat on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and would do it on Tuesdays or Thursdays, which I never can permit, and I'm sure it all came from her love of books."

"Indeed, Ma'am, I would never read unless you gave me leave, and I really would endeavour to keep to the hours and days you wish."

"What do you think, Mr. Bennet, will the girl do?"

"I wish, my dear, you would not ask me — when I've the gout in my foot, you know I can't bear to be spoken to."

"That reminds me," said the lady, "your duties would include sitting with your work in

the room when Mr. Bennet has the gout; I hardly ever do, he's so violent, and he requires some one at such times whom he can scold and abuse as he likes: do you understand?"

"I think I should hardly be qualified for this part of your place, Ma'am, and I am sorry that you did not mention it sooner, as it would have saved you further trouble."

"Oh, nonsense; what does it signify? you'd only have to sit quiet, and he never throws any thing worse than his book or his slippers at any one, and you would not mind that."

I told Mrs. Bennet decidedly that I could not take the situation; and as I withdrew, — inclined both to laugh and cry, — I heard her say to Mr. Bennet, "Really girls are so saucy in these days, there's no bearing it: they talk of difficulty in finding places, but it's my opinion the difficulty is to find servants."

After dining with my mother, I was sufficiently rested to give her an amusing account of this visit; but, though she smiled, she did not like my having been exposed to this sort of scene, and said she thought she must go with me to the next place. I thanked her, but was secretly determined that she should not, as I well knew her annoyance would be much greater than mine, and would, perhaps, induce her to forbid my going into service. A note was waiting for me from

Miss Evelyn, mentioning another place, but stating that she knew little of the family, except their being stylish-looking people, whom she occasionally met in society. Biddy Walsh also had heard of *another* situation, in the family of a professor of music: but she said the whole family were music-mad, and, as the daughters were also actresses, my mother refused to let me inquire about it: so the next day I set out, with a weary spirit, to Mr. Dacre's, in Rodney Street, where Miss Evelyn had directed me. A footman in gorgeous livery opened the door. He was grave, almost sullen in his manner, as he asked my business, and went up to announce me to Mrs. Dacre. I was shown into a dark back drawing-room, which felt very cold; for, though the weather was freezing, there was only a handful of coals in the grate. Mrs. and Miss Dacre, tall, haughty, gaunt-looking ladies, were sitting there busily employed in sewing. Miss Dacre was turning a gown. After some general questions, Mrs. Dacre asked what wages I expected? I named 16*l.* 16*s.*, which she said was more than she ever gave: she could get a good ladies' maid for twelve. I then said I would come for 14*l.* 14*s.*, and it seemed as if this would settle the matter in the negative; but as I consented to some things, which I thought trifling, but to which former applicants had generally refused to submit, she became very desirous that I

should accept the place, and the wages were settled, by my agreeing to take 14*l*. Just then a Mr. Harris and Mrs. Harris were announced, and were shown into another room. Mrs. Dacre desired her daughter to go and say she was engaged. Miss Dacre went to change her dress, which was extremely shabby, and re-appeared in a smart, but not unladylike costume for the morning, made very tight and very fashionably. I did not fancy the place at all, but I resolved to try it, and was told to come in another week. The carriage was at the door, and a miserable-looking coachman in the same gorgeous livery as the footman, asked me if I was coming to live there? I told him I was, and then he said, "Mind you bring warm clothing: you'll not find much on your bed at this house."

I went home far from comfortable. There was something chilling, almost desolate, in the appearance of the whole family, and I noticed, amongst other things, what seemed to me very strange, that Mrs. Dacre always addressed her daughter as Miss Dacre. I did not tell my suspicions to my mother: I had fixed to go, and it would only have made her uncomfortable.

A few days before I left her, we heard a quick knock at the parlour door, and a sailor lad entered, who must we thought have brought us tidings from Johnny; but the moment he spoke we knew

it was Johnny himself, and he hugged us in his old, rough, hearty manner. The next two days we did nothing but talk: there was no end to family details, and no satisfying our curiosity about his voyage, about India, his companions, his captain, and his adventures. He was to sail again in ten days, and I was glad to leave him with my mother when I went to Mrs. Dacre's. Mary returned that same day in time to drink tea with me before I started for Rodney Street, escorted by Johnny.

CHAP. V.

MRS. DACRE's was, indeed, very different to either of my previous situations. It was a family of county gentry, living in Liverpool for the sake of combining economy and gaiety, and striving to keep up an appearance of wealth and station upon very small means. I learnt these, and many other particulars, from the old coachman, who had been with them forty years, and whose steady attachment to the family, for the sake of the former Mr. Dacre, was not to be shaken by the follies and unkindness of the son. Every thing not visible to the gaze of strangers was on the most contracted scale. The scanty supply of food was the most painful to witness, I say to witness, for, poorly as we were generally obliged to live, it was trifling compared with the privations of the family. Had the same self-denial been exerted by them for any good purpose, it would have been truly noble; as it was, no one in the house could respect them. It was necessary that a certain degree of comfort should be allowed, or no servants would have stayed in the house, except the coachman and cook, who had been so long with them; but the gay liveries, the appearance of a footman,

the reputation of having a governess and a ladies' maid, the dressing for calls and visits, and the occasional tea or dinner party, were all supported by subsisting on bare necessities. I never saw a good fire the whole time that I was there; no one had sufficient bedding for winter; the bread was often so stale, that it had to be soaked in water before it could be used; the wages of the old servants who had served them so faithfully were seldom paid; and no one had more than was just enough to prevent their giving warning. The family, when alone, would often live upon heavy puddings, to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and every invitation was eagerly accepted, to lessen the charges of food, candles, and fuel: but to counterbalance these economies came the heavy expense of dress; and this I soon found was the chief reason for their requiring a ladies' maid. I had been surprised at their taking me, for I had suspected that much household work would have been exacted, which they must have seen I was not strong enough to perform; but there was little time for any thing besides personal attendance, and the sewing. It makes me almost shudder to look back to that period of my life: besides plain work, mending under garments until they would no longer hang together, repairing household linen, making caps, gowns, and bonnets, there was endless trouble and time expended in perpetually remaking and

altering, to keep up with the rapid changes in the fashion. I could never have accomplished half of what was to be done, but for the sitting up, when the ladies had gone out to parties : it was dreary work : Mrs. Dacre would herself leave the few coals for the kitchen fire, which she expected to last till two, three, or four in the morning ; and then the straining of eyesight, when working by the dim light of a single candle, and the weariness of these vigils repeated four or five times a week, as they often were in the winter season, were almost more than I could bear. Yet my own troubles seemed almost light, when compared with those of Miss Janson, the miserable, unhappy governess. I used to look upon her, and wonder why such things were permitted : her face was deeply marked with care, want, and sorrow ; it seemed as if her wretchedness was too deeply seated to find vent in words, and if it had, *who* would have listened to them ? her eyes were tearless, for she had no sympathy to bring the relief of tears. No friends came to see her, for her home was afar off ; and that home was too poor to receive her again, or to permit her to think of leaving her present abode. She was highly accomplished ; and her time was fully occupied in teaching and cramming two pale-faced girls of fifteen and sixteen, who were to come out, with all the array of music, singing, drawing, and

languages, in the hope of securing some establishment, which should release them from further bondage under their home system. I used to pity these girls, but not as I pitied Miss Janson; for education had already done its work, in making them as anxious to learn as their parents were for them. It seemed a desecration of affection to call this house a home. The best of the family, they told me, was Mr. George: he was now at college, upon a short allowance, and trying to keep up appearances in obedience to Mr. and Mrs. Dacre, who had actually forbidden him to become a Sizar, as he more sensibly had wished. They did not approve of his entering any Liverpool house of business; and he was studying for the bar, not having interest to make it worth his while to think of the army or the navy.

About a month after I had come to live there, he came home, in consequence of his money running short, and his determination to contract no debts. He was like the rest of the family, but more reserved than haughty, and he bore with sullen patience the reproofs for bad management, which were constantly addressed to him. Little things made me suspect that his apparent indolence only arose from not knowing how to employ the time and energies, which he was not allowed to use as became a poor and honourable man. With cold manners he would yet sometimes give

proofs of consideration very unlike the rest; but his general appearance indicated entire hopelessness of effecting any good, and he seemed indifferent what became of him, or what was said to him. My sitting with the ladies, to work for them, enabled me to observe much of what went on, which would not otherwise have come before me.

I tried to pay little attentions to Miss Janson; but she did not at first seem to understand them, and when she did, rather shrank from them, as if afraid of being drawn into any expression of her feelings: I used to fill a bottle with hot water for her in the winter nights, but I dared not let Mrs. Dacre know, for she would have forbidden it as extravagant, and I think this first made Miss Janson speak to me: she was so much with her pupils, that it was not very easy to do so in private; but at last she became fond of me, and would weep when I expressed my compassion for her lonely state. Once she said,—“Far better for me, if I could be a respectable servant in some kind family; I should at least have some of the comforts of life, and there would be some one to speak to, some one who would love me, amongst the other servants; and no *good* mistress would allow any one to be so overworked or so treated as I am, and must be, while I remain here.” I ventured to advise her leaving the place, and

asked if she could not become an upper nurse?" "I would willingly, Rose, but, small as my salary is, it is more than I could earn as a servant, and I have a poor crippled sister, who looks to me for help. I am angry at myself for what I have said, but my heart seems so full, and your kindness has led me to speak more openly than was perhaps right; I almost hate the talents I possess for music and drawing: these pursuits, which were intended as relaxations for the mind and to increase our appreciation of all that is good and beautiful in the creation,—to me are associated with the sordid striving after vain distinction, with heartless indifference to the welfare of others, and with the years that I have dragged on in teaching them either to unwilling pupils, or to those who studied them for the low purpose of attracting notice by their exhibition."

This was the outpouring of a crushed spirit, but it would be unfair not to state, that when she gradually acquired the habit of confiding in my affection, she seldom spoke in this bitter strain: her spirit was too meek; she more frequently adverted to the suffering which this unhappy family brought upon themselves, to remembrances of her own early and happy life, and to her strong conviction that all her trials were sent for a wise and good end. She liked me to repeat simple hymns and psalms. Her memory was singularly reten-

tive, and stored with chapters and texts from the Bible, without which she said the isolation of her existence would have deprived her of her reason. I could not help fancying she looked a little better after giving vent to her pent-up repressed feelings, and it gave me renewed strength to go on a little longer in this unpleasant situation.

I was out one afternoon purchasing some cheap materials for mantua-making, when I saw Mr. George Dacre, walking with two ladies, apparently mother and daughter; they were very quietly and plainly dressed: the younger one was not exactly pretty, but she had a very sweet, pensive expression of face, and her manner was timid. When I came home Mr. George met me in the passage, and desired me on no account to mention these ladies. I told him that I should never think of such an interference; and a few days afterwards he asked me to take a note directed to Mrs. Howard, who lived in a small house, in Falkner Street. I took it from him, and went first to my mother, whose house was very near, and asked her if it would be right for me to undertake such commissions. She saw no objection, and told me that she knew the family of Mrs. Howard to be very respectable; she believed that they were Catholics. Miss Howard had once given her some work, and my mother had been much pleased with the cheerful, simple appearance of the well-

arranged little household, when she took the work back. Before I left her, the postman brought us a letter from Charles, who was just appointed minister to the congregation to whom he had preached for the first time: this was pleasant news, and cheered me as I walked back to the cold, uninviting abode of Mr. and Mrs. Dacre. When I returned, I found the cook in great distress, and begged her to tell me what was the matter. With some hesitation she informed me that she had heard an hour before that her only brother, who had met with an accident some weeks previously, which had disabled him from working, was in danger of being thrown into prison by the baker, whose debt he was unable to pay. His poor wife had come to the cook, hoping that she might assist them: cook immediately went to her mistress to ask for the wages, which had been long due; but Mrs. Dacre declared she could not pay them, and that so many things had been broken in the kitchen there was hardly any thing to pay. This was not true: there had only been two or three trifling accidents; but this was Mrs. Dacre's way, the cook said, of depriving them of their earnings. After crying some time, she said she would go and give warning, much as she wished to stay by them, for her old master's sake. Away she went, and came back saying her mistress had begged her to wait ten minutes, be-

fore she decided. I thought they would never, surely, part with one who not only had served them with disinterested fidelity, but who was an excellent cook, and did more work from her affection to the family than any two new ones would have undertaken.

Mr. George came down, and, calling cook, said, "Ann, you must not leave us, though I do not wonder at your wishing to do so: will two guineas be sufficient for your brother? I know that you ought to have more, but if this would be enough for to-night I will see about the rest to-morrow."

"Quite enough, thank you, Mr. George: I'd be loth to go, I'm sure: many thanks to you; I'm afraid it's not altogether convenient to you letting me have this money, and if it was myself that wanted it I would not take it."

"It is your own money, Ann," said Mr. George gravely, "and I hope you will be paid the rest to-morrow."

I was surprised the next day, when Mr. George had gone out, to see Ann coming from his room. She said to me in a whisper, "I knew he'd be parting with something, and he had an old silver tankard given him by his grandfather, which he kept in his wardrobe; Mrs. Dacre would not let it be used, for it was thin and shabby-looking; but it's gone, and a mighty fuss she'll make if she dis-

covers it. Poor Mr. George ! he deserves a happier home than this, and for his sake I'll not go, even if they don't pay me my wages."

About this time, a public meeting was advertised, to take into consideration the repeal of the disabilities of the Roman Catholics, Mr. Evelyn to take the chair. Miss Dacre had been so seriously indisposed, that she had been obliged, very unwillingly, to have the attendance of a physician, and Dr. Powel had been several times to see her. Two days after this meeting, which excited the excessive indignation of Mr. and Mrs. Dacre, I was sitting with the latter, trimming a thrice-cleaned straw bonnet, when Dr. Powel was shown in. After some conversation about Miss Dacre he proposed to go up to her room, but Mrs. Dacre stopped him, by asking if he had not been to the Roman Catholic meeting? "Yes; it was a very good meeting, and Mr. Evelyn spoke with his usual energy and eloquence."

This was too good a pretext for dismissing the doctor, whom she had never any intention of paying, to be overlooked; and she replied with much warmth, "I am surprised, Dr. Powel, that having done so you can think of coming *here* again, and I certainly shall not allow you to attend our family, after such a demonstration of your revolutionary opinions."

Dr. Powel was inclined, at first, to laugh, sup-

posing that she could not be in earnest ; but perceiving his mistake, he assumed an expression nearly allied to contempt, and replied coldly, "Then I shall have the honour, Madam, to wish you a very good morning," and he left the room abruptly, before the lady could indulge in further invectives. I suppose I looked astonished, for Mrs. Dacre said angrily, "Attend to your work, Rose ; you'll please not to mind what your betters think right to say ; a pretty piece of presumption in you to suppose you have any right to think about such matters."

Miss Evelyn called one day, when Miss Dacre was better, to ask her to spend a day in the country : she was very glad of the invitation, as the family were anxious to be intimate at Larchwood, and had not found it easy to obtain any footing there ; they were, indeed, very unsuitable companions. When Miss Dacre returned in the evening, I heard her tell her mother with great triumph that she had had a nice silk gown given to her by Miss Evelyn, adding some particulars in a low voice, which occasioned Mrs. Dacre to say, "It was very well done."

Some time afterwards, when I happened to meet Miss Evelyn at my mother's, the conversation, quite accidentally, led me to refer to the gown she had given to Miss Dacre. "Do you really mean that Miss Dacre herself wears that

dark dress which she took back from Larchwood?"

"Yes, Ma'am, I heard her say that you had made her a present of it."

"I did so — but it was on the supposition that it was wanted for a person in distress; and I am sorry she did not tell me that she wanted it for herself; however," she continued, looking annoyed, "do not let us talk any more about it; she is quite welcome to the gown."

I saw plainly enough that it had been obtained under some false pretence, and I disliked still more to live with people who could so act. — I remember another affair about a gown, which also excited my indignation. With considerable trouble, we had made up a ball-dress for Miss Dacre — and, on the day for which it was wanted, this dress could not be found. As the housemaid had taken it from the back drawing-room, she was charged with its loss. I asked her what she had done with it? She said she had folded and wrapped it up in a piece of calico, to keep it free from dust, and had laid it on a chair in Miss Dacre's room, and had not seen it since. Mrs. Dacre was exceedingly displeased, declared she was "sure the girl did not speak the truth," and accused her of "having stolen it."

Knowing that the poor creature had received no wages for nearly twelve months, it certainly

appeared suspicious, and I again begged her to recollect whether she had not moved it, or put it into some other room. She looked up with astonishment, and said, in a tone of wounded feeling, "Do *you* doubt me, Rose? I would rather starve than take what did not belong to me; and what should I do with an old ball-dress? I thought you would have stood by me; but there is no one who cares for me here, and I will not stay another night in the house."

I assured her that I did not doubt her word, and tried to comfort her, not without success; but all was undone again, when Mrs. Dacre, in the harshest manner, told her that unless she paid the full value of the dress, she must leave the house immediately.

Alice turned pale with fear, as she replied in a choked voice, "I have no money: you have given me no wages, and now, because you cannot find a gown, which must have been mislaid, you would turn a half-starved, penniless creature into the streets."

"You cannot expect me to give you a character," returned the lady, with unmoved coldness; "and, unless the gown is found within an hour, you shall go, I am determined."

How the unhappy girl wept! I told her she could demand her wages, and that they had no right, without paying them, to dismiss her: but

she said, "Who would believe my story? No one! — no — no — she has ruined me."

I persuaded her to make one more search for the dress, which proved of no use, and I then went myself to ask for her wages: they were positively refused; and Mrs. Dacre said she should not stay, "whatever the law was." I packed Alice's things, and, without asking permission, left the house, and walked with her to my mother, who received her with the greatest kindness, offered her a bed in her own room for a few nights, and advised me to write a statement of the affair to Mr. Evelyn, which I did before returning to Rodney Street. I knew poor Alice would have the best of comforters in my dearest mother, and I went back with a lightened heart. Mrs. Dacre, though displeased at my going out without her leave, knew the value of my services too well to make a quarrel of it, though I could perceive its effects in her additionally haughty manner. The very next day came a note from Mr. Evelyn, which, I suppose, contained a threat of applying to some legal adviser; for Mrs. Dacre, soon after receiving it, brought me the wages which were due, and told me to take them to Alice. I gladly obeyed, and found her almost ill, from distress of mind: she was very thankful for the money, and Mr. Evelyn had generously sent her two guineas besides; but all this could not console her for

the aspersion so recklessly cast upon her character. The two younger Miss Dacres were less hardened than their mother and sister: I questioned them very closely, and was soon convinced that they knew something about the affair: at last, after much entreaty, and explaining to them what would be the injurious consequence to poor Alice, of their silence, they confessed that they had hidden the dress under the bed in their room, on purpose to tease Miss Dacre, who was very cross that morning: they had been at their lessons when Alice left the house, and were now afraid to confess what they had done.

Grieved as I was, to hear of more unamiable conduct, I never felt more relieved; and not daring to trust the young ladies, I went directly to the parlour, and stated the fact. Mrs. Dacre shocked me by her cruel indifference about the whole matter, as it affected both her daughters and Alice, and it was with difficulty that I obtained leave to go and tell the good news—Mr. Dacre saying, with his usual disregard of our feelings, “What’s the use of keeping servants if they are always to be running out? you are a great deal too lenient in that way, Mrs. Dacre: I should like to know how much work Rose has done the last three days.”

Poor Alice! how her face glowed, when I related what had passed: she said she would not go

back again, even if the place was offered to her, and I confirmed her in this resolution. My mother was now very anxious about me, and I told her I had made up my mind to give notice, that very evening, that I meant to leave in a month. I did so, and encountered more abuse than I could have supposed any one had the power to utter.

In Alice's place, came a good-humoured, though not very bright, Welsh girl: she was less tried than the rest of us, for she did not understand English thoroughly, had an idea that all ladies were haughty and grand, and rather admired Mrs. Dacre's stateliness and contemptuous manners. When she was scolded she would smile, and smile, and courtesy, saying, "Just as madam pleases," often without attending in the least to the directions given. She had never been in service, and certainly could not have continued in it long, had she not been more capable of learning from example than from precept: any thing that I showed her how to do, she learnt directly, and did well; but except an extraordinary flow of speech, when any countrywoman chanced to come to the door, and indulged her with the Welsh language, she neither spoke much, nor comprehended when others spoke. She seemed to think there was a great scarcity of eggs and bacon, and considered herrings and potatoes poor substitutes:

the white bread, too, was harder and worse than the black mountain bread, and if the latter was fresh, she might well think so.

I went one night, when the young ladies were asleep, to see Miss Janson : she had been looking very ill for some weeks ; and as she lay listlessly and helplessly in bed, her black hair contrasted mournfully with the marble whiteness of her complexion. She was very thin, and her small, transparent hands seemed hardly equal to perform their necessary offices : she welcomed me with a kind, sad smile, and said, before I could speak, " I am glad, for your sake, that you are going to leave this place ; and, though I shall lose my greatest earthly comfort, I shall not be here long, to miss you."

" Are you going away ?" I asked eagerly, and rather surprised, after what she had formerly told me.

" Yes, but not to another situation. My dear Rose, my health and strength are fast fading, and you must rejoice for me that the hour of release is not far distant."

Her health was, indeed, broken down ; but I did not think her death so near as she did, though it seemed to me that her words would prove too true, if she remained much longer in her present wretched home. She then talked to me of her only brother, the one whom she believed to have died

in India; and she showed me his miniature, which was the greatest treasure that she possessed: it was very like herself, and had the same expression of melancholy and sweetness in the eyes and mouth. I lay awake some hours that night, thinking what could be done to save this interesting and innocent sufferer, but no way presented itself; and I fell asleep with the conviction, however, that if it was best for her, her heavenly Father could restore her to happiness. She was too feeble to leave her room the next day, and her pupils went to her; for it did not occur to any of them that when a person was ill, a day's rest *might* be a comfort! Some one called me soon after, and the Welsh girl gave me a confused message, which seemed to concern Miss Janson more than me, as far as I could make out, but I went to the drawing-room, where, she said, a gentleman was waiting: I had a confused idea that it might, possibly, be Edward Grant, and was not sorry that Mrs. and Miss Dacre were gone out to make calls; but the moment I entered the room, the resemblance to the picture which I had seen the previous evening was so striking, that I felt sure it must be either Miss Janson's brother, or some near relative. He bowed politely, and said he wished to make some inquiries about his sister, Miss Janson, who, he had heard, was a governess there, and was ill:

he pressed me so urgently to tell him all about her, and the family she was with, that I was obliged to confess the truth, which seemed to overpower him beyond endurance, and he hid his face for some minutes in great emotion. He had not thus questioned me until he found she believed him to be dead; for his first impulse had been to rush to her room; but this I prevented, by explaining to him her delicate state. He then said he would go for a physician, that he might know if it would be safe to remove her; whilst I communicated to her the unexpected happiness which had been mercifully sent in her hour of need. Great caution was needed; and when at last I ventured to tell her that her brother would return in ten minutes, she went into hysterics, from which she was recovered, and seemed tolerably composed before he entered the room, when she immediately fainted. But oh! how happy she did look when her consciousness was again restored! Dr. Harcourt came soon after, and gave her brother permission to take her to the hotel where he was staying. Mr. Janson asked me to pack up his sister's things, and wrote a note of cold apology "for any inconvenience that he might occasion to Mrs. Dacre by this sudden step: he told her that the physician said Miss Janson was not in a state to fulfil the duties of teaching, which led him to hope that he should rather save

trouble, by relieving Mrs. Dacre from the charge of an invalid; that he should make no demand for the arrears of Miss Janson's salary, as he had no intention of letting her return, and he trusted that this would satisfy Mrs. Dacre for losing the advantages which she had derived from his sister's cultivated mind and superior accomplishments." He wanted me to accept a present of money, but this I at once refused; and Miss Janson said, "*I shall give you a keepsake, Rose, by-and-by; I know you love me too well to refuse me.*"

I asked them, when they were in a roomy coach, in which Miss Janson could lie down, where they were going: Mr. Janson said he should take lodgings at Bootle, that his sister might gain some strength, before they attempted the long journey to the south, where their old home was situated; and they should hope to see me at Bootle, where they would probably be stationed for three or four weeks.

They drove away, before Mrs. Dacre came back. I did not see her at first; but, from little things which came out, I guessed that she was well satisfied to have had such excellent tuition for the girls, for six years, without paying more than a few occasional guineas. The girls were nearly old enough to go on without Miss Janson; but Mrs. Dacre would have been very glad if they

could have had another year's instruction, especially in music, at so cheap a rate.

Mr. George had been much from home, and I supposed spent his time at Mrs. Howard's; but after this had gone on for three weeks, his visits ceased, and he appeared more gloomy than ever. It was now near the day for my leaving this miserable family, rendered still more desolate by the departure of Miss Janson, sincerely as I rejoiced in her happiness. She wrote me a most friendly letter to tell me that she was better, giving me the direction of their lodgings at Bootle, and inviting me to spend a week with them when I left Mrs. Dacre. She said her brother had returned with a sufficient fortune to enable them to live very comfortably, and she should no longer be obliged to earn her own living. They should in future reside not far from Exeter, where Mr. Janson had heard of some opening for his entering into a business, which would be near their former home. Her poor crippled sister was delighted at the prospect; and Miss Janson concluded her letter by saying, that if I could come to Bootle I should see some acquaintances whom they had made, and who appeared to know all about me. I supposed that she alluded to the Grants, who lived near their lodgings, and was exceedingly puzzled what I ought to do. I could not bear to give up the

visit to one whom I loved so dearly, and yet I feared that it was not an advisable step, after what our gossiping bathing-woman had told me about Mr. Wilson. On the other side, I felt a strong wish to see both Edward and his sister, and a consciousness that they, too, would like to see me. I tried to write a refusal, but could not, and I determined to wait until I could consult my mother, whose judgment would be more unbiassed.

I had received my wages, and was leaving the house on the appointed morning, when Mr. George followed me to the door, and gave me a note for Miss Howard, which he begged that I would entreat her to read. He was, he said, afraid of her sending it back unopened, as she had latterly forbidden him either to visit or write to her. I promised to use my best endeavours, and called there on my way home. She coloured when I came in. I told her first of my leaving Mrs. Dacre, and then spoke of Mr. George's kindness to the old cook, as a preface to producing his note. Her eyes sparkled when she saw it, yet she refused to read it, saying, "It was better not—better she should forget him." I laid the note on a table, and wished her good morning.

I was anxious to hear what my mother would say about this affair. She welcomed me with tears of joy, which showed me how very uncom-

fortable she had been about me. She told me that she had lately seen Mrs. Howard, who had spoken of her daughter's not looking well, and had told my mother that she thought it arose from some doubts which Miss Howard had lately felt about the Roman Catholic form of worship. She did not, of course, allude to Mr. George Dacre; but when my mother heard that he was forbidden to come to the house, she thought it was very likely that Miss Howard was afraid of being influenced by his opinions, while she was not yet decided upon her own views. I may as well mention here, that this surmise proved correct. Miss Howard was already attending Church, but she could not communicate this to Mr. George; and I know not what would have been the end of the business, had he not accidentally met her there, and contrived to have some conversation with her when escorting her home.

It was not until late in the evening that I found courage to ask my mother's advice about my visit to Bootle. I told her all my wishes, hopes, and fears. She advised me to go, not for a week, but for two or three days, which she thought were due to Miss Janson, and reminded me that I could not be sure that she alluded to the Grants, and that, if she did, she hoped I should be able to meet them as acquaintances, without allowing my peace of mind to be disturbed. I was much re-

lieved by her decision, and in a few days went to Miss Janson. She looked so happy that I hardly knew her again : the first evening we spent alone, not, however, without allusions which showed that the Grants *were* the friends of whom she had spoken. They came the next day, and I had much delightful talk with Jane Grant. Her brother kept aloof, but he watched me closely, and was often very absent. We went out to walk on the shore, and chance obliged Mr. Grant to offer me his arm. After talking some minutes upon indifferent subjects, he with great embarrassment alluded to his uncle, and his peculiar character and prejudices : then, referring to the accident from which he had rescued Mary, he told me how much he had been struck with me, and that, in spite of all his efforts, the attachment deepened with every casual interview, until it became a part of his existence : that Mr. Wilson had forbidden him and Jane to call on us the day after Mary had fallen into the water, in consequence of Jane's description of me ; for he was very desirous that his nephew should form some grand connection, and he watched with jealous care all intercourse with families of whom he did not approve. Edward proceeded to declare his love for me, and his determination, if I gave him any encouragement, to act for himself as soon as he became his own master, which would be the

case in another year. I did not deny that he had excited some interest in me, but I could not say more; and, even had it been right on other accounts, I was quite unprepared to enter into any engagement, beyond consenting to see him if, when the year was expired, he should wish to renew the acquaintance; and I should not consider him in any way committed by what had passed that evening. I kept to this arrangement in spite of entreaties, arguments, and protestations, and was not sorry to return to the house, and, in my own room, think over what had passed.

The next day I was again alone with the Jansons, and the following one I went home, only seeing Edward and his sister for half an hour in a call, when nothing particular occurred, except his warmly shaking my hand when we parted. My mother approved of my conduct, and, having unburdened myself to her, I tried to fix my attention upon other subjects; and it was fortunate that I was soon and suddenly invited to another situation, by a note from Miss Evelyn, offering to take me, as her own maid was leaving her in a week's time, on account of ill health. I believe no other family would have possessed sufficient inducement for me to again enter service, after the experience of my last place, but this could not be refused; and my mother was

so delighted, that it gave me fresh energy to encounter another strange house.

On the appointed day, the phaeton which had taken Mr. Evelyn into town called for me on its way out, and I once more left my mother, as I hoped, in my heart, for the last time.

CHAP. VI.

I WAS very impatient to see Larchwood, and its venerable appearance fully equalled my expectations. It was an old house, built with grey stone and Gothic windows, and covered with roses, ivy, and other creepers. Within doors, every thing was in the most perfect order: cleanliness and purity pervaded its atmosphere, and the refined taste visible in all the household arrangements made it the most delightful residence I ever knew. Mrs. Evelyn welcomed me almost like my own mother, and a few days sufficed to make me feel at home.

There were family prayers every morning, read by Mr. Evelyn, with an earnestness which communicated itself to all his hearers, and commenced the day's labours with feelings of peace and hope. On Sunday evenings, Mr. Evelyn often read passages from the Bible, commenting upon them with the same eloquence which he displayed at public meetings. Enthusiastic benevolence was the most striking feature in his character; and well might he speak with power over the hearts of others, for their interests were his, whatever they

might be, and even seemed as if they had been matters of his own individual experience ; this it was that made his sympathy so true and comprehensive. The greater part of his time was consumed in attending to the petitions for advice and help which came in shoals every day. His high principles, perfect integrity, and great abilities, gave him much influence in his native town, and occasioned his being frequently selected to assist in the management of its affairs, and to take the lead on public occasions. He had been asked to become one of its representatives in parliament, but had refused, because he thought that his present sphere afforded greater opportunities of usefulness. He was rich, and made noble use of his wealth. The old housekeeper used often to say, “ *Her* master’s riches would never hinder his entering into the kingdom of heaven, but would rather smooth the way.” The housekeeper had been in the family more than forty years, and always talked “ of *our* family,” “ *our* young ladies and gentlemen ;” and she considered their misfortunes and their joys as much her concern as theirs.

The out-door steward or bailiff was a great friend of hers, and was suspected of having once aspired to a nearer connection. He was very fond of telling stories of the family, their dogs, their horses, and their children, in the long winter

evenings, while he pursued the old bachelor habit of darning his own stockings.

My dear Miss Evelyn and Mr. Frank were the only children living at home: the others were married, and came on frequent visits, bringing their little ones to see grandmamma and grandpapa, a treat at all times, and to all. The shyest, gravest child would unfold to grandmamma; and the little baby, crying at sight of a stranger, would stop if she took it in her arms, and pat her face, and try to express its love, before it could speak. One lovely boy, just three years old, had a particular fancy for daisies and dandelions, which he used to beseech grandmamma to smell, and which she often put into her gown. I have seen her with five or six at once, which she would keep till his bedtime.

Mrs. Walsingham was Mr. Evelyn's oldest daughter, and Charlie was her only child: they were our most frequent visitors at Larchwood. A great friend of Charlie's was a large Newfoundland dog called Nelson, whom he used to decorate with his favourite dandelions: their bright yellow on Nelson's black shining hair pleased him greatly; and when the decorations were completed, he always brought him to the nursery, the kitchen, and the parlour, saying, "Very handsome now." He was a noble dog, docile and generous; though entertaining some of the

fancies more commonly belonging to the smaller species of dogs. He had taken a capricious dislike to one of the stable-helpers, who used to turn the mangle—a noise which exceedingly tried Nelson's equanimity, and from which he always escaped as soon as possible; but whether the man was going to the mangle or from it, Nelson always turned back when he saw him coming, and would not go near his dinner, if the man happened to be in the yard. Another of his fancies was barking when the great dinner bell rang; and if at a distance at the time, he hastened back, and howled as usual, even though it had then stopped. Mr. Evelyn once brought home a large wolf-like looking dog which came from Greenland. Charlie, fond of all animals, soon began to fondle this huge creature, which no one else liked to approach very closely. This dog had a sad habit of howling in the night; not only now and then, but constantly, and in a loud high key, which disturbed the rest of every one in the house: it was chiefly from the sense of loneliness, for he stopped directly if any one went near him. Charlie could not bear this: he generally went to bed before he began, but if he was not asleep, and heard him, it made him cry. One evening, Charlie could not be found for half an hour after his usual time for bed, and after some hunting about, he was discovered in the kennel, fast asleep, with his arm round the great rough dog, who seemed very well

satisfied. Mr. Evelyn hoped that the howling would cease after a while ; but as a fortnight produced no effect, he thought it best to send him away.

The housekeeper was very fond of poultry, and she had a few bantam fowls in the back yard, where she could watch their proceedings. It was Charlie's great delight, if he could find the door open of her little parlour, to tempt the hens, which were very tame, to come in : she would then pretend to be angry, but it always ended in a laugh, as he was a great pet. One morning she was called away for half an hour, and on returning, found Charlie scattering some bread for a cock and hen, who seemed too busy cackling to attend to him ; and on going up to the empty fire-place, she discovered a new laid egg in the grate. This Charlie thought a wonderful event, and he made off to tell it to every one he met. Nelson and the child were on the grass that afternoon, close to the pond. The little boy was making a daisy necklace, and a party of young people stood near, watching some others who were in the boat. Mr. Frank was not at all pleased that he had been left behind, and had brought down a large washing tub, in which he thought that he could reach the boat : he got in very carefully, and was pushing off, when a lively girl, who seemed on the watch for some adventure, declared

she *would* go with him, and jumped in: the tub instantly upset, while the spectators screamed, and Nelson immediately plunged in. The water was not deep; and Mr. Frank helped the young lady, when he found his footing, to disentangle her clothes from the willow stumps and rushes at the edge; which so deeply affronted Nelson, that he went off, without waiting to see them on dry land: he had first caught hold of the lady's arm, and could not brook this interference.

At Mr. Evelyn's I was much struck by the invariable consideration which was shown for our feelings; and I have heard the men say, that he would check any one at his own table who was making remarks which might be unpleasant to those who were waiting. The manners, too, of the whole family were not only quite free from pride, but had no coldness. They seemed never to forget that their servants felt like themselves, and when asking them to perform any service, they always did it so gently, and with such evident belief and trust in their good-will, that it produced the most hearty, loving service. Books were provided, and encouragement given to improve ourselves. We had two parties yearly, one at Christmas; and the other at Midsummer, when we had strawberries in the hayfield, and a violin for dancing.

After I had been about three months at Larch-

wood, I received a small parcel containing a watch, with a ribbon and seal attached to it: the latter had a Forget-me-not engraved on it; there was no message, nor did I know the handwriting of the direction, but I felt sure it must be sent by Edward, and I was displeased that he should do so, after our arrangement that he should wait a year, before he even made his proposal to one who knew so little of him. I sent back the watch to him through my mother, begging her to write a few lines with it, which she did, and I heard no more of it for some time after. One evening, Mrs. Evelyn called me into her dressing-room, and desiring me to sit down, asked many kind questions about my mother and family, and then taking up one of some very fine cambric handkerchiefs which lay on the table beside her, she said, "I am very glad your mother keeps so well, and that time seems to improve her health; yet one sees some little marks of age." I was surprised, and wondered to what she could allude. She continued, "*Very* fine work must, I should think, be bad for her, and I am almost glad that she has declined making these handkerchiefs." I felt startled, though I hardly knew why, and I asked, anxiously, if my mother had mentioned her eyes as the reason?

"Yes, my dear girl, but remember *how* fine this work is, and if what I have said has made you anxious, you can go and see her to-morrow,

when I am going into town, and will take you with me." I was very glad to assent to this, for I was beginning to feel very uncomfortable, not being able to dismiss the suspicion, that my kind mistress had wished to express some anxiety on the subject, without alarming me. As I was leaving the room, she said, "I wish, Rose, that you would ask your mother and Mary to come here for Christmas day; they had better sleep here, and I will take care about their return the next day." I thanked her, and withdrew.

The following morning we went early to town, and I got out at my mother's door. She had seen the carriage stop, and met me at the head of the stairs: "My dear Rose, is any thing the matter—you look so strange—tell me, dear?"

"That is what I want to ask you, mother: why did you send those handkerchiefs back? is your eye-sight really weaker, or are you ill, mother? oh, do tell me at once."

"Dear Rose, why *will* you always think so anxiously about me? you know how much I have done of that close sewing, and it is not unnatural that I should be unwilling to go on until I lose my power of seeing altogether; it is like other powers, it must be used, and not abused."

She said this with one of her own bright smiles, and I was comforted, but I could not be easy without asking if she thought her sight was at all lessened: she replied,—

“I hope not *lessened*, but it *is* rather overstrained, and requires rest; and now, Rose, sit down, and tell me about Larchwood and all the Evelyns.”

Before I left her, I told her all that she wanted to know, but not just then. I am afraid I behaved very ill about it; but the fear took possession of me, that her sight was failing, and it was some days before I could at all shake off the impression, and I still often felt anxious.

Christmas was always a lively and animated season with Mr. Evelyn's family: preparations were commenced a fortnight previously, clothing given out—to be made by those in distress for work—meat ordered, and invitations sent. The day before Christmas day was the busiest: the morning was spent in giving away the food and clothes ready-prepared; not to every casual beggar, but to those only whose real wants and necessity had been ascertained; then came the arrivals of the married children with *their* children, and the house resounded with the music of merry voices, and of little feet, scampering up and down stairs. The festivities began at five o'clock, for the sake of the young ones: many others were asked, friends and acquaintances, and many with no claim but Mr. Evelyn's kind remembrance of those who had no home or amusements, and who would otherwise have been alone and neglected.

Fireworks began the evening, and it was de-

lightful to listen to the children's exclamations and clapping of hands when the rockets went up: then came tea, followed by blindman's buff, snap-dragon, grand-mufti; and at eight o'clock, by an old-fashioned supper, with a boar's head, a peacock pie, and a wassail bowl on the table. When this meal, accompanied by many songs and much mirth, was over, the younger ones, very unwillingly, were put to bed, and the dancing was begun by a group of morris-dancers, dressed and got up by Mr. Frank: they danced in the old hall, richly wreathed with evergreens, and lighted by two fires and huge wax candles. It was a beautiful sight, but no one looked so beautiful as Miss Evelyn. I saw her dancing with a fine-looking, gentlemanly man; and as we stood watching them from a door-way, I fancied that I perceived Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn also looking at them, and then smiling and sighing, as they glanced at each other, as if pleased to see their child appreciated, yet unable to think of the possibility of her leaving them without regret. I may as well mention here, that Miss Evelyn did afterwards marry this gentleman. The party ended early. While I was helping in the servants' hall to put away some of the things, I saw the back door and the kitchen windows wide open, and I was told that the housekeeper always opened them on Christmas eve, for Christmas to come in. She shut them after waiting a few minutes, and seemed

quite satisfied; but she would not answer our questions as to whether she had really seen any one enter.

The next day, the family and all that could be spared, went to church: the dinner was early, and simple, though plentiful. I spent a quiet, happy afternoon with my dear mother and Mary, hearing much family news; amongst the rest, that poor Mr. Herbert was nearly gone, and that Charles was probably coming down to see him once more. After an early tea, the large family party were ushered into a room, which had been kept carefully locked since the arrival of the juniors. Here stood the Christmas tree in all its glory, attended by two little girls dressed as angels, with wings of silver gauze, to distribute the presents: there was an immense number, many of them the work of different members of the family, showing much thought and knowledge of each other's tastes and feelings. All the household was included; but Charlie was not pleased, because Nelson did not value his top; however, grandpapa, his constant ally, consoled him, and Charlie never wanted any thing else, when he might sit on *his* knee, and receive his undivided attention. In the latter part of the evening, when the tree was exhausted, there was a family concert of sacred music: Miss Evelyn played the organ, which was a gift from her father; and I saw the tears in his eyes when

she was playing the "pastoral symphony," and then, when it was over, sat down at his feet. We had been allowed to attend the concert, and when it was ended, a short address and prayers concluded the day. Nothing could have been better liked, or could have given more pleasure, and it seemed to me a good plan to have the dancing and games the evening before, and to keep the sacred music, and the gifts to each other, for the Christmas-day, whose joyful and affectionate greetings are necessarily connected with glad but solemn associations. Very pleasant was my service with Miss Evelyn: she used to like me to sit with her in the afternoons before dressing for the evening; sometimes she read to me, and sometimes I read to her; she took pleasure in instructing me, and was pleased that, like herself, I admired and loved poetry. Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, too, reminded me of former days; they were so tenderly attached to each other, and their mutual understanding seemed so entire. Mrs. Evelyn was yielding in disposition, and this suited the quick and somewhat impetuous temper of Mr. Evelyn: she looked up to him as to some superior being—a feeling which he entirely reciprocated,—and I used to think that if one died, the other would not long survive. How much good they, quietly and unostentatiously, accomplished!

Mr. Evelyn's great objects through life had

been the promotion of peace, freedom of conscience, and the general welfare of mankind. Mrs. Evelyn fully entered into all his views, but her own labours were in a quieter line: she visited the prison and the infirmary; imparted knowledge wherever she could, and was the constant friend of the suffering and afflicted, whether in mind or body. Yet all this never interfered with the comfort of regular household arrangements; she was at all times ready to receive her children's confidence, to consult their wishes, to attend to their affairs, and to visit them in their own homes; and no one in the house ever had the feeling that she was too busy to be applied to. Sometimes she went with Mr. Evelyn to London, when he was sent there on political deputations, and he declared that she was of more use to him than two secretaries. The great struggle for parliamentary reform was then going on, and I heard it said, that no one, out of the House, did so much in the cause as Mr. Evelyn.

Soon after Christmas Mr. Evelyn was summoned to town, and as Mr. Walsingham was going with him, Mrs. Walsingham and Charlie again came to Larchwood. The winter was severe, and a fatal species of influenza made its appearance: the young and old were especially attacked, and were its most frequent victims. Mrs. Evelyn came to the nursery one morning, where I was helping, Mrs. Walsingham's nurse being far from well. She

said, "I wish, Rose, you would prevent Charlie from running into nurse's room: I am afraid she has taken this sad complaint, and though many think it is not infectious, we cannot be too careful: I do not like to mention it to Mrs. Walsingham, but, I confess, Charlie seems to me not quite well to-day." He came in as she spoke, and I took him on my knee: his little hands were hot and his eyes heavy, but he talked as usual, and was very anxious that Nelson should come up stairs. Soon afterwards he fell asleep: and I laid him in his crib. As I looked at him, the terrible thought came into my mind that he was going to be taken from us, and I wondered where his mamma was, and whether she had noticed his looks. I went to her room, where she was writing, and told her that the child was asleep: she seemed grave, and said she had been writing to Mr. Walsingham, and had thought it best to tell him that Charlie was not quite well, though she hoped it was of no consequence. She followed me to his crib, and bent down to feel his pulse. "It seems faster than it was an hour ago; you try, Rose, for perhaps it is my fancy." I too thought that it was faster, but not much. He remained in the same state during that day and the next, and played about, almost as usual, though evidently rather feverish. I could not resist the conviction, the day after, that he was weaker: he sat more still, and when Nelson

was brought in, was much quieter than was at all customary. Mrs. Walsingham looked very anxious, and I ventured to say that I thought him weaker, and asked her if she had sent for a doctor? She grew pale, and said, "Yes, it is so: I have tried to think otherwise, but now——" she became faint from long suppressed apprehension. I called Mrs. Evelyn, who told me that she had sent for Doctor Harcourt, and this somewhat relieved Mrs. Walsingham, when she recovered sufficiently to hear it. Late in the evening the Doctor came: he asked many questions as to how the child had played, and if he had taken food, &c. He said there was very little wrong at present, but that he must be most carefully watched; and he told us what to do, should the languor increase the next day. His words were more hopeful than his manner, which was very grave, and he promised to come early in the morning. I sat beside Charlie the first half of the night, during which he slept peacefully; the latter half his mother came to him, and desired me to rest, saying, in a whisper, "We do not know for how long our strength may be needed." Her mournful tone chimed in with my own fears. In the morning, I went in with some breakfast for both; Charlie was talking, and seemed pleased with what I brought: but he could not eat, and his mamma's tears fell fast, as she ate, in order to tempt him. He looked up in

her face, and said, "Mamma shouldn't cry"—
"Charlie kiss mamma." She kissed him several times with passionate fondness, and went out of the room to regain her composure; but from that hour she did not again leave him. Doctor Harcourt came, and his opinion was unfavourable. He wrote himself to Mr. Walsingham, telling him that he had seen worse cases recover, but that at present nothing seemed to arrest the rapid reduction of strength, and he begged him to come *immediately* upon receiving the letter, which would not be until the evening of the following day. It was a sad addition in this hour of trial that Mr. Evelyn should be also absent; he was one of those, too, whom Charlie oftenest named. He was very restless that day, sometimes asking for papa, then Rose, then grandpapa, and was only quiet when Nelson was by the bed, and he could put his arm round his neck, or when some one would sing to him. It was a great grief to his mother, that she could not finish a single song: tears would gush forth, and it annoyed Charlie if there was any pause. I sang the most frequently, and then he always lay quiet: he had many favourite songs which he asked for by name. In the evening he was much worse, and more advice was sent for. He had been moved from the crib to a low couch, for the sake of freer air, and three doctors stood by the little bed; but what could they do? It

was God's will that Charlie should not live even to see his father return. When Mrs. Walsingham had once lost all hope, she never gave way to emotion: she looked deadly pale, but was perfectly composed; doing every thing herself, and watching her boy as if her looks would have power to keep him from death. She scarcely spoke, except when he looked at her: sometimes he would open his eyes, smile, and close them again in a sort of stupor. The least sound out of doors made his mother start. She was anxiously expecting her husband, and every minute seemed to confirm the fearful prospect, that he would not be in time again to see the living form of his only child. Mrs. Evelyn was the support of all: she wrote all necessary letters, provided for every one's comfort, and while she encouraged no false hope, was ever ready with "the word in season," which came from such heartfelt trust in our heavenly Father, and such exceeding love for those around her, that even then, her presence was felt to be the greatest consolation we could experience; — I say we, for there was not a person in the house who did not love Charlie, and to me he was like a precious brother; I was deeply thankful that I was permitted to stay by him to the end. The last words I heard him utter were after he had drank something cooling: without unclosing his eyes his head sank back on the pillow, and he said very softly,

“ Charlie love Nelson, Charlie loves everybody.” I shall not attempt to describe the closing scenes: they would be too painful for those who have gone through similar ones, and they would not be comprehended by those who have not. But the family I was with were true Christians, and they did “ not sorrow as those who had no hope.”

It was long before Mrs. Walsingham came again to Larchwood. Mr. Walsingham took her abroad, for her health was much shattered; nor did it seem to improve, until she had once more the prospect of becoming a mother. Before she went, she gave me a large locket with a bright rich curl of poor Charlie’s dark-brown hair.

It is said that misfortunes never come single, and it certainly often happens, that many deaths and trials, in which we are deeply interested, do *seem* to occur in close succession. The day after little Charlie’s funeral came a letter from Susan, telling me of the death of our old and valued friend, Mr. Herbert. This was by no means unexpected, and his decline had been so long and so gradual, that we were all prepared for the sad tidings. Yet no preparation can prevent some degree of shock, when we hear that some one is gone for ever from this world; for, though we truly hope to meet and to know each other again, our future mode of intercourse is so utterly incomprehensible, that we are liable to be lost in a

dread mist of uncertainty and confusion. I hastened to see my mother, who would, I knew, feel this loss greatly. She was calm, but sorrowful, and almost as much afflicted about Charlie as about Mr. Herbert. When I looked at her, I was uncomfortably struck with some change in the expression of her eyes, and she allowed that they were weaker, and had not benefitted by rest as she had expected. Whilst urging her with tears to consult a surgeon, dear Charles came in. This was indeed a bright ray of sunshine. He said he was going to stay with her some days, as he must attend Mr. Herbert's funeral. After giving us an interesting account of the peaceful close of our old friend's long, well-spent life, I told him my fears about our mother's eyes. He instantly took the alarm, and said he would go for a doctor, and he went immediately; but the doctor could not come before I was obliged to return to Larchwood. It was well that it happened so, for the opinion given confirmed all our worst apprehensions, and I was glad to be alone. The surgeon said that cataract was forming in both eyes, and that it would be a year before they could be operated upon. That this *could* then be done, ought to have been a great comfort, but I could not feel it so at first. Charles said our mother was really quite cheerful, and talked of Mary's singing and reading to her, as if

she should be a gainer by her misfortune. This was to be expected from her well-regulated, pious mind; but her children could not so easily be comforted.

I shall never forget Mrs. Evelyn's kindness on this occasion: she talked and soothed me for hours together, procured all that she thought would contribute to my mother's comfort; and her sympathy consoled me in this, the greatest trial that I had ever experienced in my life. Miss Evelyn arranged for me to spend the Sundays at home; and she read every thing to me which could give me information on the subject, and enable me most effectually to help my dear and only parent. And all this care for my concerns, was at a time when their hearts were wrung by their own afflictions.

Months passed quietly away, and the spring came and went almost unheeded. It was in June that I received a letter from Edward Grant, reminding me that the year of probation had elapsed, and asking permission to see me. I wrote to tell him of my mother's state, of her increasing blindness, and of my determination never to leave her until her sight was restored. I told him that I was on the point of leaving my situation in order to live with her, and reminded him that I had given him no encouragement beyond permission to visit me when the year was over, and I begged him to

remember that he was still almost a stranger to us. He came to call after receiving this letter, and I allowed him to visit me once a week, while I was with my mother. I now permitted myself to think of him, and was surprised to find how much I seemed to know of him, when I considered how seldom we had met. But I was much engrossed with my mother, whose general health was not good; and I was anxious that she should remove to Hale, as Mary was now old enough to be placed as a boarder in the family of a music-master; indeed she was beginning to teach, and already earned something.

I forgot to mention, in the right place, that at Christmas, Willie had been appointed junior usher in the same school where he had been educated, and he much liked his new mode of life. When he should be rather older, we thought he might make a home with Mary, as it was not necessary that he should sleep at the school, which was the present arrangement.

And now came a sorrowful parting with the kind and excellent family at Larchwood, where I had spent the happiest year of my life while in service; but I knew that I should see them often again, which lessened the feeling of separation. They were, indeed, constant friends to us, and they admired and loved my mother's sweet character so much, that I felt assured they would

come to see her. Mrs. Evelyn said they should perhaps be arranging a pic-nic at Hale in honour of the birthday of her oldest grand-daughter, in the course of another month. This redoubled my anxiety to go there ; and, with Mr. Evelyn's kind assistance, we managed to remove to our new country lodgings in about a fortnight. Never did the country look brighter or more beautiful ; but my pleasure in it was sadly diminished when I remembered that my mother could no longer see its beauties. How I thanked God, that first evening in our new home, that I was permitted to be with her once more, and to care for her in her season of weakness, as she had cared for me all my life !

CHAP. VII.

I LOOK back upon this year at Hale with much pleasure. However much I grieved to watch the increasing evidences of declining sight, yet my mother's spirits were so cheerful that I could not despond. She always dwelt upon the bright side of every thing; but this did not prevent her from feeling with those who were not able to look on the world with her singleness of heart, her humble, confiding trust in the wisdom and mercy of the great Author of all our blessings and our trials. Edward generally came to us on Saturday, and stayed over the Sunday. We had a stout girl for our servant, and this set me at liberty to be my mother's constant attendant. Nothing won so much upon my affection as witnessing Edward's gentle and respectful attentions to her. He always brought books or papers with him, and would read as long as she had the power to listen. By making her comfort his first object, I knew how truly he loved me; and, after two months had elapsed, one evening, when the harvest moon shone brightly into our little sitting-room, he won my consent to become his wife so soon

as my mother's sight should be restored. He was still on good terms with his uncle, though Mr. Wilson was aware of his visits to Hale; but Edward did not know how far his disapprobation of them might affect our future prospects. The next morning my brother Charles unexpectedly made his appearance. He told us that he was come to escort Miss Herbert to London, where she had an aunt residing, and from whose house they were to be married. Clara was at this time staying with the Rainforths, and for Charles's sake she consented to the marriage taking place sooner than she quite liked it on her own account. We were sorry to lose her society: during the last three months she had been with us daily; but we were thankful that Charles should again have the comforts of a home, for his very domestic tastes had rendered his London life almost painfully desolate.

Charles and Clara departed, and in about a month their wedding took place. The short letter which announced it was signed by both their names, and underneath Charles had written: — "I know, my dearest mother, that you will send me your blessing on receiving this intelligence. How I long for my father's! but perhaps he has given it, though we cannot hear his voice. May I be to my Clara what he was to you!"

The next event in our quiet cottage life was a

note from Miss Evelyn, mentioning the day for the pic-nic, which had, after a long delay, been fixed. She said the children were very anxious that I should join them, and she hoped I would come to the little wood near Hale Hall, where they were to dine, at two o'clock: Mrs. Evelyn proposed drinking tea with my mother. We were much pleased to think of seeing these dear friends again, and Susan said she would stay with our mother, if I would go to the dinner. I fixed to do so, though not particularly liking the idea of leaving home for several hours. The pic-nic was admirable: there were four carriages full of people, and every thing was arranged with the nicety of Larchwood. How pleasant it was to see them all again! Poor Nelson caused a sigh, as I thought how Charlie would have enjoyed the merry party. Caroline Evelyn, the queen of the feast, was a very sweet-looking girl, just fourteen: she was crowned with a wreath of flowers; and when dinner was over, and the singing commenced, her brothers, sisters, and cousins, sang a lively glee, with words of playful compliment, which had been written by Mr. Evelyn in honour of the day. Before they separated, to ramble on the river side, and about the pretty village, a very large pie was placed on the ground, in the midst of the circle. A fine laughing boy was deputed to cut it open, but he

declared it was too hard. Mr. Evelyn, putting a large knife in at the edge, raised the whole lid at once, and a cry of delight and surprise burst forth, when it displayed an assemblage of presents, not only for Caroline, though hers was the largest share, but for the whole party. This took up so much time, that the hour had come when Mrs. Evelyn had fixed to join my mother: I walked with her, and one of the party followed us, a gentleman who had been introduced as Mr. Davis, and whom I had not noticed particularly, although he certainly reminded me of some one whom I had seen before. Mrs. Evelyn asked leave to introduce him at the cottage, saying she thought that he and my mother would be mutually pleased, and she added, that Mr. Davis had taken lodgings at Hale for a week, intending to sketch some of the old black and white cottages. Of course I could make no objection, though I thought it rather strange. We passed the evening, however, very agreeably: the stranger was entertaining, and friendly in his manners.

Mr. Davis came again for several evenings together, generally staying two or three hours: he was, I supposed, fond of young people, as he often asked my opinion on different subjects, and made himself thoroughly acquainted with the little that I knew, and the much that I did not know. I wished Edward to see him, but on Saturday and

Sunday he did not come, neither was he at church; on Monday again he came. We were becoming fond of his society — my mother enjoyed his conversation, and we were sorry when he told us that he was come to take leave: — he hoped that it would not be very long before he paid another visit to Hale, when we might be sure that he would come to the cottage. The next day I received by the post the following letter, dated Bootle, 22d September: —

“MADAM,

“My nephew has informed me of the engagement between you and him, but I am afraid it may have been entered into with false expectations on your part. Mr. Grant has a small share in my business, which brings him in perhaps 200*l.* per annum: but my personal property is left by my will to other relations; and it is fitting that you should be aware of this, before you bind yourself to a husband, whom you suppose to be rich, but who *is* poor.

“Your obedient servant,

“ROBERT WILSON.

“Please to answer this by return of post — addressed to Bootle.”

I did answer it by return of post, as follows: —

“Hale, 23d September.

“SIR,

“Mr. Grant has never deceived me, as to his future prospects; and though I have hitherto hoped that you might forgive him for engaging himself to one who has no fortune, your letter convinces me that we must not expect, at present, to be favoured with your sanction to our marriage. I will still hope that the time may arrive, when you will come to see us in our humble but happy home. You cannot suppose that your letter could make any change with regard to one, whom in my heart I have promised to love, whether richer or poorer.

“Believe me to be, respectfully yours,

“ROSE ALLEN.”

To this letter I promptly received the following reply : —

“MY DEAR MISS ALLEN,

“Your letter is what I hoped, and indeed expected to receive. There *was* a time, when I was much displeased with my nephew’s engagement, but since I have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance (under the name of Mr. Davis) I have changed my mind, and I only wished to ascertain what, when you gave your consent, were your expectations for the future. The will which I spoke of is now destroyed; and I have this

morning signed a new one, making Edward my sole heir, and in the mean time settling 600*l.* a year upon him, which will enable you to live very comfortably. I know, and approve of your resolution not to leave your mother in her present dependent state. Give her my affectionate and respectful regards, and tell her that the next time I come to Hale I will do my best to convince her how highly I appreciate her good daughter, who will, I hope, ere long become my niece. Believe me, with much esteem and affectionate feeling,

“Very truly yours,

“ROBERT WILSON.”

How gladly did Edward read this letter, which his kind uncle took care should arrive on the Saturday; though *I* could not help feeling rather foolish, when I thought of the scrutiny to which I had been subjected. Edward was not at all pleased at this last trial of faith, but he was too well satisfied with the result, long to resent his uncle's strange fancy. When we were talking over our first acquaintance, Edward said his sister Jane had sent the presents to my mother, which she used to receive, anonymously. He never lost sight of me, though, when I went to Miss Barker's, he had not heard of my going to service, and was much surprised to see me there. He had felt anxious about Mr. Harry Ashton, as he had

heard exaggerated reports of his being a very wild young man. He had also sent me the watch when I was at Larchwood, fearing that I should forget him, and unable to resist making the attempt to establish some intercourse between us. This watch he had kept, until we met this summer, and he gave it to me on the evening when we made our engagement.

As winter approached, my mother became quite blind ; and the doctors told us that in May she might probably have the operation performed. Susan spent the winter with us : she was now old enough to take the charge of our mother, provided we should be blessed by her restoration to sight. My mother meant in future to live at Hale with Susan and Robert. Our cottage was not far from the homes of Sarah and Fanny, and we were all fond of the place. Mary's destination was decided, by her receiving an excellent offer to reside as music teacher in a large school, when she should have been a year longer with her present master. In April Edward took a pleasant house, with a small garden attached to it, about a mile from Liverpool. We neither of us liked the Bootle neighbourhood, besides it would have settled us still farther from Hale. Mr. Wilson came to see us occasionally, and was always a welcome visiter : as he grew older, the haughtiness of manner which had been formerly so remarkable

almost vanished, and I am sure he was improved by his conversations with my dear mother.

Early in May, Charles and his wife came to see us, and to be with us when the operation should take place. The 10th was my mother's birthday, and that was the day fixed upon. Clara, Charles, and I went with her to Mr. Sandford's house in Liverpool: she never lost her calmness, and she spoke cheerfully and quietly of the future. It was an awful moment, when she was seated in the formidable arm-chair. I knelt beside her, and held her hands, while Charles stood close by to help. The surgeon was quick, and, after a few moments, which, notwithstanding, to us, seemed like hours, he said, "Do you see any thing?" "It is light, and now it is dark, and now it is again lighter." This change of light, Charles afterwards said, was occasioned by a hand being held up between her eyes and the window, and then removed.

Mr. Sandford seemed satisfied, and I believe that he then operated on the other eye; but at the time I did not know this, for I could not bear to look up, and we had been told not to speak. After another pause, the doctor said again, "What do you see?" "It looks like a stick." "It is all right," and he began to bandage the eyes, after which she fainted. When brought to herself again, her first words were, "I thank God for

this great, this undeserved mercy : my dear children I thank you, and you, dear sir, who have been the cause of so much joy." "Now then," said the doctor, who was afraid of her being agitated, "you mustn't speak another word, nor any one else just now : put her into the carriage, and do not unfasten the bandage to-day." He gave some more directions to Charles, after we were in the carriage. We stayed a fortnight in town that she might be under the doctor's care. All went on well ; and as soon as the medical treatment was over, and she seemed able to bear the journey, we set off to return home. As we approached Hale, we gave the coachman a little white flag, which was to be the signal to our relations and friends that we were coming. No sooner was it displayed than we heard the village bells begin to chime. "Whose wedding are they ringing for ?" asked my mother. I tried to speak but could not, and Charles said, "It is our neighbours rejoicing with us in the restoration of your sight." She laughed, saying, "Oh no, dears, that is only your fancy." I believe she never knew that the bells were rung for her, and she treated the allusions which were made to them as jests. In three days after we came home we took off the bandages ; and oh the joy, the unspeakable happiness, of again meeting her glance of affection, filled with the deep love which she bore to her children : well might we think

those eyes the most beautiful that we had ever seen. How she enjoyed the flowers, the sunsets, the garden, and more than all, the being able to read her Bible! When she first took the book it opened accidentally at the 103d Psalm, and she read it aloud, saying, as she began, “ ‘ Bless the Lord,’ is indeed the language of my soul this evening.”

My story is now concluded. I did not return to service, and I will only briefly state, that a month after this great blessing had been granted to us, Edward and I were married at Hale Church, surrounded by all my brothers and sisters, Jane Grant, Mr. Wilson, and some of Mr. Evelyn's family. We took a short journey to Llangollen; and then returned to our new home, where our mother promised to visit us, when a few weeks were gone over. I saw that she wished me to become more independent of her constant help, as she could not be always with me; and I therefore did not urge her coming sooner, though the temptation was strong. Edward is much engaged with business, and our two nice servants leave me, just now, much leisure. To beguile some of the long afternoons, while waiting for Edward, I have written these sketches of the different situations which I have filled, hoping that they may suggest to those, who do not *always* pay due attention to the welfare of their households, the

duty of consulting their servants' feelings, which are so often the same as their own; hoping also that they will endeavour to bear in mind how easily they may wound, and how easily they may gratify, those who are dependent upon them for the daily comfort of their lives. *Very strong* are the mutual bonds of duty and obligation between servants and their employers. And when they are properly felt and attended to, very valuable are the friendships which may be formed. At all events, very pleasant may their mutual intercourse be rendered, when servants give themselves up with heartiness and good-will to the performance of their various duties; and when their employers remember that kindness and consideration are as much due to their feelings as is attention to their bodily comfort, or the punctual payment of their wages.

THE END.

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